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WAY-MARKS

IN THE

LIFE OF A WANDERER.

THE INCIDENTS TAKEN FROM REAL LIFE.

By Caroline E. Rush

BY THE AUTHOR OF

ROBERT MORTON, THE DEW-DROP OF THE SUNNY SOUTH, ETC. ETC.

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TO

MY BELOVED AND DEARLY CHERISHED FRIEND

Mrs. A. B. Kitchen,

I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE VOLUME

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF ESTEEM,

AND TRUST SHE WILL EVER HOLD IN KIND REMEMBRANCE, ITS

AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

A FEW years ago I visited some friends in Georgia, and there gleaned the incidents upon which I based the contents of this little volume. If I have sometimes mingled the experiences of my own life with the Wanderings of the fair Marcia, the reader will please forgive me, and admit that a certain degree of fiction must be allowed in names of persons and places.

Of the religious tendency of my work I would only say, to read it will be to convince you that I have written, praying as I wrote, that God's Spirit might descend upon me, and teach me how to benefit my fellow creatures.

Not quite two years have elapsed since, left in destitute circumstances, with two small children entirely

dependent upon my exertions for their support and education, I embarked in a literary career, and in the fullness of a grateful heart must I say, that God has bounteously strewn my way with blessings. In New York, Boston and Philadelphia; in the noble cities of the Far West, and in the genial cities of the Sunny South, troops of friends have surrounded me; and every where I have met with the encouragement and sympathy which have made my sorrowful lot supportable.

I think I should acknowledge that the first element of my success has been the favor and kindness I have received from the editors. From the hurry of business, the discussion of politics, the perusal of foreign intelligence, they have come to see me, listened to my simple story, read my book, and announced to the public my design in such glowing terms, that the whole public heart seemed to beat with sympathy, and the entire number of the rich and favored would come forward with words of encouragement to subscribe for my book. I can never hope to thank them sufficiently for all they have done, but I feel confident God will bless and reward those who have scattered upon the Wanderer's way, the flowers of life and hope.

To the kindly attention of the noble-hearted and the good, I submit this little volume, feeling that though it has many faults, it has more to recommend it than any thing hitherto laid before them by its grateful

AUTHOR.

Way-Marks

IN THE

LIFE OF A WANDERER.

CHAPTER I.

I received a letter, turned it over and over, read and re-read it, and said, "Dear Mother, he has sent for me; I am going: are you not glad?"

The next thing was to get ready. I had many little things to make and mend. I set myself heartily to work, for I remembered that the doctor had said to my mother, "This winter in a southern climate is her only chance of life."

Mother packed my trunk. She took care I should have a plentiful supply of ginger-bread for my carpet-bag. She laid in one corner of my trunk, a bible, in another, some flannel vests. She then locked it up, and dropped the key in the pocket of my traveling dress which hung over the back of a chair.

The hour of departure came at last. My mother kissed me, and bade God bless me. I stooped down

and embraced my little brother, and said good-bye to him, whereupon his tears burst forth and he clung to me tightly.

"Dear, dear sister," said he, "you will not go away and leave me?"

"Only for a little while, darling," was my reply.

I passed my hand over the golden curls that shaded his infant brow. I pressed him to my heart, and kissed his rosy lips. My traveling companion handed me into the carriage; the driver cracked his whip, and we were gone. I looked back at the dear home of my childhood; my mother stood waving her last adieu, and my little brother was weeping bitterly. I wept too—can you wonder?

Oh! that dear little brother of mine, sweet Benny; how often, when afar from the home of affection, shall I recall his attachment for me, his only sister. Shall I not remember, too, his gentle voice pleading with me not to leave him? Oh yes, many times.

Did you ever travel by the mail route, from New York to Georgia? Oh, you did. Well, then, I need not describe to you its fatiguing and monotonous characteristics. I will only tell you of some of my own experiences.

My traveling companion was an old bachelor, who if not positively cross and ill-natured, was, to say the least of it, very stern. He made me sit next to the open window to keep the cold off from him. He took up two-thirds of the seat, saying in the most don't

speak to me kind of manner; "if I incommode you in the least, Miss Walton, let me know." Now, as I happened to be rather small, and very timid, I did not dare to complain, but squeezing myself into the smallest possible compass, assured him there was plenty of room, and so there was in truth, only he kept it all for himself.

I peeped out from under my bonnet, and inspected the parties who sat in front of me. A gentleman and lady sat in the next seat. They had turned over the back of another seat, upon which they deposited, with an air of perfect non-chalance, a carpet-bag and numerous shawls; conversing together at the same time, with great indifference to an old lady, who remained standing in the end of the car, unable to get a seat, till the conductor forced the passengers to be civil.

From looking at surrounding objects, and becoming wearied of their sameness, I at length turned my attention inward and devoted my thoughts to myself. I had been educated in such a manner as to fit me for the arduous duties of teaching, and had been but three weeks emancipated from the school room. I was now on my way to a distant place, to which I had been called in the capacity of governess in the family of a rich lady, widow of a southern planter. My spirit yearned for the home I was leaving behind me, and my fond, devoted mother, and darling brother, whose winning ways had engendered in my heart the

tenderest affection. I knew that I was setting out in the great world alone, and as a woman, I felt all my own weakness of mind and body. I had studied to make myself competent to teach others, until my health had been seriously undermined, and a settled cough fastened itself upon me, and stole the roses from my cheeks. My anxious mother called in the doctor, and he bade her send me instantly to the South.

But here arose a great difficulty—how was this to be accomplished? My mother was a poor widow; her income was barely sufficient for our maintenance, and she was obliged to eke it out by constant and diligent application to her needle. Indeed, she had denied herself many comforts in order to have me receive the benefits of a first rate education.

One morning as she glanced over the paper, an expression of delight escaped her. Ah, what an inestimable blessing is that same morning paper. In yonder spacious mansion there is joy and gladness. A son has been expected home from sea. There have been mighty storms agitating the surface of the great deep; fear and terror have filled the hearts of father, mother, brothers and sisters. But now dawns a glorious morning; the ship has arrived at quarantine; the news is telegraphed, and with joy-beaming eyes the delighted family read the morning paper.

Again, in the home of poverty, a lonely widow sits, not moodily, not sorrow-stricken, but gay, bright, and

happy. She has a son, an only son. He was walking the day before on the bank of the river. A little boy was playing there. He fell in the deep, dark water. Not one of all the crowd stept forth to save him but her own noble boy. He threw off his jacket, plunged beneath the tide, and rising again to the surface with his helpless burden, swam proudly to the shore. He waited for no thanks; he desired none. They looked for him, but he was gone. The rich father was determined to reward him; he wrote a full account of the accident, and spoke in glowing terms of the brave boy who had periled his life to save that of his child. Oh, sweet to that fond mother's heart was the eulogium contained in the morning's paper. And the paper of this morning, to which I refer, contained that which made my heart beat high with hope. "Listen, Marcia," said my mother, "Hear what a kind Providence throws in our way,— 'Wanted, a young lady well versed in all the branches of a sound English education, and *au fait* in all its graces and accomplishments, to teach a family of four children. A handsome salary will be paid, and also all traveling expenses from any part of the United States. The situation is in Georgia, twelve miles from the city of D. Address a note to J. H. Woodville, Irving House, New York.'"

As my mother finished reading this advertisement, I sat back in my chair, so very happy that I could not speak. I did not wait to be told twice to answer

it; I opened my desk, and wrote a list of my accomplishments. I spoke very timidly of my ill health, but warmly declared my desire to please, and the hope that amongst the numerous replies the advertisement would call forth, mine might meet with a favorable reception. I mentioned my references, and having sent my letter, returned to my sewing, believing I should never hear from it again. A week passed away, and no word of intelligence reached me relative to the matter. One day we sat as usual busily employed in needle work; my cough had been very troublesome all day, and I felt unusually weak and dispirited. I have no doubt I was paler than common, for I saw my mother's gentle eyes resting upon me with a look of anxious solicitude. The bell rang, and in a few moments a stranger was ushered in, who handed a card to my mother, and bowing politely, took a seat, and eyed me closely from beneath his heavy lashes.

The stranger was a tall, large man, about sixty years old. His hair was black, and slightly intermingled with gray. His eyes were black, large, and piercing, and seemed to have lost none of the fire of early youth. His wide mouth was filled with handsome teeth, and there was something in the expression of this feature that betrayed to the eye of the beholder a hardness of feeling which was in reality assumed, and not the native emotion of the heart. It was only when interested in conversation you

would have pronounced him handsome. His face was sunburnt and swarthy; and before my mother announced the fact, I was aware that Mr. Woodville, the Georgian, stood before me.

A mutual introduction now took place, to which I replied by a joyous inclination of the head, for hope was bright within me. The stranger bowed politely as before. He asked me many questions, to which I replied modestly enough, for I was abashed in the presence of the stern Georgian, who I looked upon, in the childishness of my heart, as the arbiter of my fate. At length he seemed to have asked me all he wished, and he leaned down over his cane, the golden head of which appeared to be to him a source of infinite delight. He grumbled something which I did not understand.

"Sir?" said my mother.

"It is a pity," he replied, "that the girl is so pretty."

"Pretty!" exclaimed my mother, "I am sure I never thought so."

Of course, my cheeks were rosy enough, now.

"Well," continued Mr. Woodville, "it cannot be helped now. I will think about it. I shall send you an answer to-morrow."

The next day, sure enough, the answer came. It was the letter I received at the commencement of this chapter. All these things passed in review before me. I came once more to the final parting;

my mother's farewell kiss; my brother's tears; all the dear associations of childhood thus suddenly sundered, and I could bear it no longer, but forgetting where I was, the stern Mr. Woodville—every thing, in fact, but my own loneliness and desolation—I broke down then and there, and buried my face in my handkerchief.

"How now, what's all this?" said a stern voice in my ear. I tried to answer, but the choking sobs prevented me. "Come, come, this will never do," said Mr. Woodville. "It is all nonsense, perfect nonsense—pooh, pooh."

Mr. Woodville coughed. I cried harder than ever, though heartily ashamed of myself.

"Well, well, this is too bad. Come, Miss, this is very silly—excessively silly."

I felt convinced of the truth of this, but still I cried on. Mr. Woodville continued—

"I can't bear to see a woman cry. If you don't stop, I'll go where I can't see you—indeed I will. I'll go in the forward car—I'll leave you by yourself; if I was a Sultan, I'd order the sack for every woman that cried in my dominions."

I made a desperate effort to be calm, and indeed the expression of Mr. Woodville's face, at any other time, would have excited a fit of uncontrollable merriment. He tried so hard to look mad and stern, and all the time I could see he was just as sorry as I was.

"Ah," said I, "it is so hard to leave mother, and

dear little Benny;" and at this mention of the cause of my sorrow, I again lost all self-control, and burst forth afresh. Mr. Woodville said—

"Yes, yes, it's hard, I suppose—but then you are not going to leave them for ever, you know. I have no doubt you feel lonely and sad at the idea of leaving them for the first time, but you must not expect to have every thing just as you wish it; that is impossible; and I doubt if it would be a blessing, even if permitted. Learn to meet the decrees of Providence with an abiding trust that He will temper the wind to the shorn lamb. Who is this little Benny, of whom you speak?"

"He is my only darling brother."

"What, that pretty, little, pale child, with the bright blue eyes and golden curls?"

"The same, the very same," I replied.

"Then I don't wonder you dislike to leave him. He is certainly one of the sweetest children I ever saw. I should judge him to be uncommonly smart too—is he not?"

"Ah, that he is, Sir," said I, completely won over by his praise of my brother. "He has always been very delicate, but he has an intellect far above his years; and then he is so thoughtful, so full of pity for any body who is in distress. Mr. Staunton calls him a complete Paul Dombey. He never wants to play with other children, but always joins us in our conversations, not boldly, and like a froward,

petted child, but with the delicacy and good taste of older years; and many times he asks questions which would puzzle the wisest heads to answer. You should hear him talk of heaven; it has often seemed to me that there was implanted in his heart undying longings for another world, as if he thought this was not his home. He often tells mother, when he is sick, that he wants to die, so that he may see God and all his angels; but he always adds, 'I don't want to leave you, dear mamma—I don't want to go to heaven without you;' and then he will twine his arms affectionately about her neck, and kiss her."

I came to a dead stop, for I perceived that I had been talking to a stranger, who certainly could not feel any interest in the subject, dear as it was to me; and I could see, too, that his object in getting me to talk was to make me forget the cause of my tears, and I felt half vexed to think he had succeeded: but the cars had arrived at the depot in Tacony, and we went aboard the steamboat, and were told that dinner awaited us below.

CHAPTER II.

" Onward! Hath earth's ceaseless change
Trampled on thy heart?
Faint not, for that restless range
Soon will heal the smart."

Let me pause awhile at this period of my life, and reflect. Ah! how little of sorrow, of the world's bitter experience, knew I then. The virgin page of life was just opened; as yet there was nothing written upon it but the sweet counsels of an affectionate and pious mother. I knew nothing of the wickedness in the world around me. By nature trusting and confiding, nothing had ever occurred to make me feel suspicious of any one. Oh! let me, like the immortal Dickens, stand aside and see the shadows of those days go by me. That happy childhood—that well remembered school-room — my kind and faithful teacher—my school-mates, many of whom were dear to me—my only sister, who laid in the quiet grave beside my father, and my little darling brother, who was born two months after my mother was a widow. How vividly memory brings them all before me—every trivial circumstance, every little nothing that makes up the sum of human existence. Yes, I recall them all, and a halo of happiness seems to surround

them, for they all speak of the home I have left. There is no bitterness in the recollection, and if I did not think it was wicked, I would wish in my heart I had died then, upon the commencement of that journey, before I had learned the sad, sad lessons, which have embittered my life, which have irrevocably doomed me to an ——, but I will not anticipate.

At ten o'clock, P. M., we took the cars, and rode on towards Baltimore. Every one seemed fixing for a nap, and I thought I could do no better than follow the example. Most unfortunately, however, sleep will not always come for the wooing, but like a coquetish girl, draws only near enough to you to elude your grasp. The long and lonely night drew at length to a close, and we changed cars, and continued our journey, passing through Washington, Richmond, Petersburg, Weldon, and arriving at Wilmington, where we took a filthy little steamer, (a disgrace to the company,) for Charleston. I know of nothing to compare to these boats, save the immense packets seen daily moving along the numerous canals which intersect our country. I spent a night on one of these canal boats, which I shall never forget; and when I mention the date to be the sixth of August, I doubt not many of my friends will recall the time. In a little box of a place called the Ladies' Cabin, were stowed sixteen unfortunate ladies, and six children. I was furnished with a bed on the supper table, and a thin curtain was all that divided the crown

of my head from that of a gentleman in the outer cabin. If I threw my hand over my head, (a habit to which I am addicted, by the way,) it was instantly seized from the other side, and a violent struggle was necessary for the rescue. The musquetoes weighed in the neighborhood of a quarter of a pound each, and the way they annoyed us was a caution to all invalids. We had a merry party on board, however, who sang "Hail, Columbia!" and "Lord Lovel rode up to the Castle gate;" and altogether we tried to make the best of a bad bargain, and were as merry as the circumstances would possibly admit.

But, to go back to the Charleston steamer. Safely seated on it, Mr. Woodville asked me how I liked it, so far? I told him I was delighted with all I saw and heard.

"But you are very tired, are you not?"

"Not much. There are many things to see, and I have no time to think about fatigue."

"In two days more we shall have arrived at our place of destination. You will not know how wearied you have been till you get into the quiet of the country. Now, Miss Walton, permit me to offer you some advice—will you not?"

"Certainly, Sir. I shall not only take it in kindness, but I shall be most grateful for the interest you display."

"That's right; never refuse to take advice from those who are older and wiser than yourself. I want

you to try to please my sister. I believe you can do it. She has her little odd ways, but she is a good woman upon the main. Her heart is in the right place after all; and for my own part, I can only see two faults that you have got."

"Pray tell me what they are, that I may try to remedy them."

"That, perhaps, would not be so easily done. However, I will name them, that you may try to correct the one; the other, I fear, is irreparable. First of all, Miss Walton, you are very proud. I do not wish to censure you for this, because I believe it to be an honest pride; but I would that you were less so, for my sister's greatest fault is her pride, and I fear, that owing to this trait in both your characters, you may have difficulty. Secondly, you are very handsome. Now, for a wealthy heiress, beauty does very well; but I do positively assert it is the worst dower a poor girl can have. If I was a poor man, and had a daughter, I would esteem it as a special favor of Providence, if I found her positively homely."

"Indeed, Sir, I never thought my beauty was alarming," I replied, with a spiteful smile; but my friend was resolved to be good-natured, and he looked at me with the pitying tenderness of a father, rather than the stern mentor I had taught myself to regard him. He continued in a gentle voice—

"I have your interest at heart, Miss Walton, and

as I took you from your mother, I feel in some degree bound to watch over you. Upon these grounds, I know you will permit me to counsel you; and if ever you stand in need of a friend, remember to appeal to me."

I thanked him, very kindly, for his offers of friendship; but now, having left the Cape Fear river, and emerged into the broad ocean, the boat rocked, and a sudden, deathly sickness came over me, and in fact over every body around me. A little boy, pale as death, ran to his mother, and said, "Oh, mamma, what did you take me to the big seas for?" There was a terrible storm at sea. Thick, murky clouds were drifted along the sky, and the forked lightning played and writhed itself amid the darkness. The waves were rolling and tossing in the madness of their fury, and our little boat at one moment rode the breast of a mighty billow, while at the next, two tremendous waves threatened to engulph her. There was no fear of death came to me then, for in an instant I was so sick that I did not care what became of me. Mr. Woodville lifted me in his arms, carried me into the inner cabin, and gave me into the charge of the chamber-maid; and so perfectly helpless was I, that he might have thrown me overboard, and I should certainly not have made any effort to prevent him.

All things must have a close, and that long and terrible night at length came to an end, and found us safely anchored in Charleston. We remained here

but a few hours, and Mr. Woodville procured me a beautiful boquet of roses, which grow in the open air all winter long, and grace the dwellings of these tasty Southern people. We arrived that same day in D., where we found a carriage and fine pair of horses waiting to take us to the plantation of Mrs. Woodville. What a lovely ride was that which we took, twelve miles through the middle of the State of Georgia. All along the road-side were scattered the most beautiful residences, built in cottage style, and surrounded with luxuriant gardens, large orchards, and verdant lawns. Oh, how sweetly the moon came out and silvered the tree tops, lighting up the bosom of earth with its soft radiance. How gently the mild, balmy air of Georgia, breathed upon my pale cheek, and bade the roses bloom again. How delightful to my senses was the perfume of the lovely flowers that blossomed around me. I was happy!—Oh, so happy! Now and then there have been moments of such happiness in my life, but alas, they have always been succeeded by such dark clouds that I have learned to dread them. I was silent, for my heart was communing with nature. Mr. Woodville broke in upon my reverie, by asking me how I liked the good old State of Georgia? "Very much," I replied. "Indeed, it seems to me to be perfectly delightful; and I think I could be happy here, if only mother and Benny were with me."

"Cease to pine for them, and I have no doubt you

will have no small share of enjoyment, for you will find that every stranger finds a welcome in the homes and hearts of the Southern people."

At this moment we entered an avenue densely shaded by two long rows of trees. A large gate was swung open, and the carriage rolled over the smooth, velvet-like turf. The tall negro gate-keeper joyously welcomed Mr. Woodville home.

"How is your mistress?" he asked.

"Amazin' well, massa," replied the happy voice of the slave. "She be spectin' you to-night."

The avenue was a mile in length, and we quickly rode over it and arrived at a second gate, which opened into the garden in front of the house. Here a whole troop of negroes, large and small, crowded around us, with gleaming torches in their hands, notwithstanding the moon shone brightly. Some helped us to alight; one took my shawl, another my carpet-bag; one lifted my trunk from the box, and carried it as if it had been a feather. Mr. Woodville offered me his arm, and we walked through the flowery walks of a garden to the house. Let me pause on the threshold to describe the situation, before I enter it.

Mrs. Woodville's residence is built on the top of a hill. In front, the declivity is so gradual as scarcely to be perceived, but at the back, it winds suddenly down to a little brook that rolls at its base. Here is the kitchen garden, well watered by the stream which has been taught to wander throughout the length and

breadth of it, and it is consequently in the highest state of cultivation. On the hill side to the left is a long row of buildings, each with their gardens enclosed. This is the negro quarter. On the right side is a thick, dense forest. The great-'us, as it is called by the blacks, is a frame building, two stories high. A large hall runs through the house, leaving two rooms on either side. The two front rooms are handsomely furnished, and one of them is used as a parlor; the other as a dining room. The two back rooms are sleeping apartments; the one adjoining the parlor is mine, the other is Mrs. Woodville's. Although the weather is mild and warm, these Georgians shiver with the cold, and a large fire, blazing with pine knots, is burning both in the parlor and dining-room. The curtains are closely drawn, and a richly chased lamp of silver is burning on the table. Every thing betrays the ease and wealth of the owner; and there is about these country residences a sort of home appearance, often looked for in vain in our large cities.

Mr. Woodville led me into the parlor, and introduced me to his sister. She sat in a large arm-chair, covered with green velvet. Her feet rested on a velvet cushion. She was about fifty years old, and her face still bore the impress of matronly beauty. But there was that about the eagle glancing of her large, black eye, and in the firm compression of the mouth, that spoke the imperiousness of which her

brother had told me. Her silvery hair was parted in the middle, and combed straight back, leaving to view a fine lofty brow. She was dressed in deep mourning, and a snowy cap relieved the darkness of her attire. She rose with all the grace of a high-bred lady as I entered, and received me from her brother's hand with a winning smile; but when she spoke, the cold and measured tone of her voice struck a chill to my heart, and made me recoil from her in spite of myself.

"I am most happy to welcome you to Georgia, Miss Walton. Permit me to introduce to you my son Octave."

A young gentleman of five or six and twenty, came forward and took my hand, expressing his delight at seeing me. It seemed to me all like a hoax. I did not believe in the sincerity of his delight.

"These," continued Mrs. Woodville, summoning to her, four children, who had been sitting in perfect silence on one of the sofas, "are my children, or I should say my grandchildren. Albert, the eldest, is now fourteen years old, and having been for the last five years in Alabama, with his uncle, his education has been sadly neglected. I trust, however, under your care, soon to see him improve. Flora, the next, is now twelve, and has only to apply herself to be a very smart girl. Gregory is nine years old, and you will understand me when I tell you, that if he is as good as he is smart, he will do very well.

And now, last and least, comes the youngest of our little family, Laurestina, six years old, who, I regret to say, knows nothing but her letters. Laurie, this is your new teacher. Will you try to learn your lesson from her, like a good girl?"

"I will, if she don't whip me," was the reply. "And why should I whip you, little Laurie," said I, stretching out my hand to the child, who was indeed one of the most beautiful children I ever beheld; and she seeing something in my pale and wearied face to call forth her childish sympathy, climbed into my lap, and throwing her white arms about my neck, kissed me over and over again. This movement, so unexpected on my part, so like the darling baby-brother I had left far away, touched me to the heart; and as the sweet memories of home and a mother's love crowded around me, I could forbear no longer, but broke down again. I knew it was very foolish, but I could not help it.

"What!" said Laurestina, "haven't you got any mother, either? I have none. They buried her in the church yard. You shall go with me, and I will show you the grave they made her."

I assured her my mother was living, but far away from me, and that I had never left her before.

"Well, then, don't cry," she said, coaxingly. What makes you cry? Oh, I know, now—you are hungry. Well, you shall have some nice supper. Mother would not have supper dished up till you

came. Let me take off your bonnet. There, Flora, take that, and put it away. Now, then, your cloak. Oh, I can't get it undone. Come here, Flora, you try."

Flora, in a few moments, removed my cloak.

"I think you are a very saucy thing, and if I was Miss Walton, I would not permit you to sit in my lap that way," said Mrs. Woodville, smiling.

"Oh, I like to have her—I love children dearly," I replied. Mrs. Woodville said—

"You have just come off a long, fatiguing journey, and we will have supper at once. With your leave, Octave will conduct you out to the dining-room."

I expressed my entire readiness. Octave said—

"If Miss Walton will permit me, I shall be too happy."

I expressed my appreciation of his kindness by an inclination of the head. He led me out, and placed me next his mother. Every body around the table seemed to have a good appetite but myself, and as they were all engrossed discussing the merits of the supper, I embraced the opportunity of examining my new acquaintances.

Albert was tall for his age, but very thin. He had a most sanctimonious expression of countenance, but at the same time he was one of those persons who are continually devising evil, and practising it in such a manner that the blame may fall on the innocent.

He hated nothing more than his book, because he was idle, and his mind was constantly roving about, without the power or the will of concentrating it upon any subject.

Flora was a beautiful girl, but the sweet modesty of her manners, rather than the peerless loveliness of her face, was her greatest attraction. Her complexion was dark, but perfectly dazzling in its clearness. Her large, black eyes were soft as those of the gazelle. Indeed, her features were faultless; and one to judge of her head, would have supposed her mental powers to be of the highest possible order. This was not the case, however. Between herself and the objects of her attainment, there ever seemed to be a veil; but she worked so unceasingly, and so entirely and industriously devoted herself to her studies, that she was sure to gain in the end what more favoured persons took in at a glance.

Gregory Grayson came next in order, and certainly I have never met a more perfect character. He was nine years old, and owing to a delicate organization, was very small of his age. No one would have called him handsome, but there was an expression of goodness in his face, more *felt* than seen. His head would have served for a model of classical beauty. His form was lithe and agile, and his eyes were bright with intellect. A love of mischief frequently got him into scrapes, but this was counterbalanced by his desire to please. I never saw a child more sorry for

having given offence, or more eager to make every reparation in his power. His retentive powers were excellent, and his comprehension of the dark points of science, was astonishing. The rapid progress he made in Algebra, Philosophy, Chemistry, and Euclid, often filled me with amazement; and I soon became convinced that he would leave me far behind in the wonderful soarings of his intellect—but, I am anticipating. He was very affectionate, and would suffer any punishment rather than betray his brother Albert, who was often guilty of acts attributed to Gregory.

Laurestina, sweet little girl, no words of praise, no high-toned description, no face of loveliness, ever eclipsed her. By nature she was beautiful. Her hair was chestnut-brown, and curled over the whitest neck in the world; her eyes were a dark, I might almost say mazarine blue; her complexion was of the most lily-like transparency, and her rosy cheeks and lips made her the picture of health. Her disposition was amiable, but she had been petted to such a degree that she was the hardest to manage of all my little scholars. Sometimes, when I got vexed with her, I would threaten to send her to her grandmother, but she would throw her arms around me, and caress me till the frown had vanished from my face, and she would welcome the succeeding smile with promises of amendment, and tell me she would positively learn her lesson, but it was *so* hard.

Let us leave Laurestina, and spare a few moments

to Octave Woodville, the son and heir to an immense estate, comprising five or six plantations, and a large sum of money in bank. He was a good specimen of a southern planter. You would not have pronounced him handsome, and yet his face and form were not without a certain dignity which lent an interest to his society. He was generous and kind, and yet, when you looked in his face, you feared to trust him. Indeed he was altogether one of those persons who are governed by impulses, rather than by any fixed principles of right. His retreating chin proved him to be a man easily moulded by a stronger will than his own; and a certain sensual expression about his mouth, bade you beware of him. He eyed me very closely, and his manner to me was so marked, that several times I felt the warm blood tingling in my cheek. He was the only son of Mrs. Woodville. The four children were the offspring of her daughter, who had died when Laurestina was a few days old; and Mrs. Woodville had taken them and adopted them as her own. They were all very fond of their uncle Octave, who indeed returned their affection with interest, and never went to town without coming back laden with presents for them.

John Henry Woodville was the only brother of Albert Woodville, deceased, and since his brother's death he had left his home in Telfair county, and come to reside with his sister-in-law, whom he admired and loved as a sister.

Such then was the family circle of the Woodvilles, and although in the quiet, peaceful country home to which I have introduced you, there may be none of the high-toned romance so fashionable at the present day, yet believe me, you will find some experiences which will remind you of home, and may perhaps awaken kindly feelings in the heart. It is ever better to portray the good rather than the evil of human nature, and only those writers can hope to win and keep the noble heart of an American public, who seek to benefit and improve mankind. Shall I not regret, when I lay my head upon a dying pillow, if I have written one line in encouragement of evil? Oh yes, and that God may make me an instrument of good, is the sincere prayer of my heart. If I can die in the belief that I have made others happy, I shall feel that I have not lived altogether in vain.

CHAPTER III.

The next morning dawned bright and beautiful, and I arose, and having completed my toilet, walked forth to enjoy the fresh sweetness of the morning air. Half way down the avenue I met little Flora, who in answer to my inquiry of where she had been, told me she had just been carrying her books to the school house, which was about a quarter of a mile from the house. She turned and walked with me, and her artless conversation, and modest sweetness of manner, interested me very much. We wandered along gathering wild flowers as we walked, and forming them into a boquet, when suddenly a horseman passed us at a quick gallop, going in the direction of the house.

"How do, cousin John?" said Flora.

"Quite lively," thank you, was the reply. "Is Uncle Octave up yet?"

"No, I think not," said Flora, but her words were unheeded, for the new comer had spurred on his horse, and was already up to the inner gate, where he dismounted. We continued our walk, Flora telling me that cousin John lived three miles on the road to D., with his sister, who had been lately married. That he was very wild, and would not pay any attention to his studies, but was up to all the mischief in the world.

At this moment somebody hallooed loudly after us, and as we turned, we saw little Jacob running towards us at full speed, to call us to breakfast. Jacob was a slave, yet he was nearly as white as myself. Of his parents I shall say more hereafter.

We returned to the house, and found the family seated at breakfast. Mutual inquiries and salutations passed between us. The conversation was then resumed where it had been dropped upon our entrance.

"Now, say you will go uncle," said cousin John.

"There will be rare sport, Simms is going, and old man Thompson, who you know to be one of the rarest old larks in the country. Oh, we will have such fun."

"Octave," said Mrs. Woodville, "don't go one inch, John might better be at his studies."

"He would'nt do any good there if his mind was'nt in them," interrupted Mr. Woodville, senior.

"I think I'll go, boy," said Octave. "How long shall we be gone?"

"Oh, not more than three days, and we can pick up plenty of company on the way-side. There is Jones that wants to go, and also Bill Thomas."

"Well, I will go," said Octave, hastily swallowing his coffee, and rising from the table he left the room. The next moment we heard his voice on the porch.

"April, put Grey Eagle and Bill's Wife in the buggy. Do you hear?"

"Yes, massa."

"Have they been well fed?"

"Yes, massa."

"How is Champion's sore foot?"

"Most well, massa."

"See to it, you black rascal, do you hear?"

"Yes, massa."

In a few moments Octave and his nephew were driving down the avenue, at a rate that made it a problem, rather difficult of solution, whether he or his harem scarem nephew was the wildest.

The hour of nine soon approached, and I set out, with my little scholars, for the school house. It was a small, but nicely built cottage, with but one room in it, and windows on every side. Upon a slight elevation at one end of the room was the desk at which I was to sit. One of the children sat at my right hand, another at my left, while two of them were placed immediately in front, and each of them had their separate desk, nicely filled with books, &c.

I rang a little bell to announce that school had commenced, and I own I felt some slight trepidation, at finding myself, who but a few months before had been a scholar, elevated to the position of a teacher. I opened a large bible that lay before me, and read in a slow, solemn manner, a chapter from the New Testament. After reading it, I asked the children many questions, to ascertain if they had paid attention to what they had heard.

The lesson I had selected was the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. When I asked the children to repeat

to me what I had been reading about, there was a profound silence for about two minutes.

"What," I exclaimed, "is there no one here who listened to me and can answer my question?"

Gregory said, in timid tone, "I can."

"Let me hear," I asked, somewhat encouraged.

"You read the parable of the sower and the seed."

"And can you remember what else."

"The parable of the tares that were sowed by the enemy, when the good man slept."

"I am very much pleased that you were so attentive, Gregory. Can you call any thing else to mind?"

"Yes. You said that the Kingdom of Heaven was like to a mustard seed."

"Children," said I, "what are you thinking about to let this little boy, nine years old, answer all these questions?"

"Our last teacher never asked us to tell her what she had been reading about," interceded Flora, in a timid voice.

"Well," said I, "whenever I read to you I want you to pay attention, for I shall always expect you to answer any questions I may think proper to put to you, and then if there is any thing you do not understand, I will explain it to you."

I now proceeded to examine my pupils, and found that Albert and Laurestina might very nearly be classed together, notwithstanding the difference in their ages.

But I cannot expect to interest you with the monotonous details of a school room. A month passed by without any event of importance, and all had been peaceful and quiet at school. An unruly spirit had, however, often threatened to give me trouble in the person of Albert. He would not learn his lessons, although I reasoned with him, and told him what would be the consequence if he encouraged his habits of idleness. I threatened that I would keep him in after school hours, and thus he would be debarred the pleasure of playing with the children. It was all to no effect. Each day it seemed to grow worse, and at last I felt that to excuse his negligence any longer was dishonorable on my part. I was paid handsomely to teach him. How could I reconcile it to my conscience to take the money if he did not learn?

I called him up to me, and opened the atlas. His lesson was in geography, and so little was he versed in that study, that he would have believed me if I had told him that Greenland was at the Equator, and Patagonia at the North Pole. I commenced to hear him his lesson, but he broke down at the third question. I forgave him that, and passed on to the next. He did not know it. The next, he had forgotton it, and Flora had taken the atlas from him before he had finished his lessson. I told him I would take no excuse. That he should go on and take his writing lesson and then recite his history, and after that he should stay in school till he had learnt his geography, be it early

or late. He took the atlas and went back to his seat, laughing. No doubt he thought I was too gentle to put my threat into execution.

He trifled away his time, and when twelve o'clock came, I dismissed the school, and bade him keep his seat. The children got on their things, and eyeing me very curiously, went out, one after another. They lingered round the door, seemingly indisposed to leave their brother in his trouble. Flora came in, after a little while, with tears in her eyes, and begged me to please forgive Albert, and let him go. I told her it was impossible, and advised her to take the children, and go up to the house with them, that he might have nothing to take his attention from his studies. She obeyed me, instantly, and left us once more alone.

I was writing some French exercises. Although apparently deeply engaged in my task, I could see Albert making faces at me. He would pull down his eyes, stretch his mouth, and apply his finger to his nose.

There are none so blind as those who will not see, and I was resolved not to notice the little comedy he was playing with himself. At last I looked up and said, calmly :

"Albert, do you know your lesson?"

"Not yet," he replied, changing color.

"You had best learn it at once then, or I fear you will get no dinner to-day."

He began to cry.

"Please forgive me this once, and I will never come to school again, without knowing my lessons."

"I cannot do it, Albert. I cannot in justice to you or myself, look over any more neglected lessons."

He cried, bitterly. I went and sat down by him, and laying my hand on his, I said, gently:

"Albert, I must insist on your studying your task. I can no longer find an excuse for your remissness. I am placed here by your grandmother to teach you. I feel the responsibility to be a great one, and I am convinced it would be sinful in me to allow you to be confirmed in your habits of idleness. When you grow up to be a man, you will come and thank me for this firmness, for you will then be assured that it was your own lasting benefit that actuated me. Now, you see it in a different light, and you think it cruel in me to detain you here."

"You hate me. Every body hates me. But you love Gregory. You never keep him in," blubbered Albert.

"Gregory always knows his lessons perfectly. He never misses a word. He takes pride in having a good mark set down to his name every day." Here I was interrupted by the entrance of Jacob.

"Misses says, please come to dinner," he said. Albert got up to go.

"Take your seat," said I, in a quiet tone. Then, turning to Jacob,

"Tell your mistress I have been obliged to keep Albert in, and ask her to please send him a biscuit and a cup of water. Tell her that I have a head-ache and don't want any dinner."

Jacob ran back to the house, and Albert said, sneeringly,

"I won't touch the biscuit, and I am glad that you will have to go without your dinner. You got a head-ache, any how, tormenting me."

"For shame, Albert," said Mr. Woodville, who at that moment entered the school room. Albert hung his head.

"Learn that lesson perfectly, you naughty boy, and don't leave this room till Miss Walton returns to it," said Mr. W. "If you do I will take away the roan filly I gave you. "Come, Miss Walton. Come up to the house and get some dinner. It will never do to let you make a martyr of yourself for this head-strong boy."

I was sorry to leave Albert all alone to bear his punishment, but remonstrance was useless, and Mr. Woodville pulled me away, and drawing my arm within his, led me along towards the house, saying,

"Bad boy, that—uncle's fault—been away five years—no sort of management—ruined—good for nothing—lazy—idle—worthless."

"Oh, I hope he is not ruined," said I. "I do not despair of seeing him improve, but it is very hard to overcome habits of indolence all at once. When they

grow so upon one they become second nature. I only regret that I was forced to be so strict with him, for believe me I would far rather win the love than the fear of my little pupils."

"You are not near strict enough, my child," said the old man, looking down at me in a fatherly way. "You were never formed to buffet with the world. You are slender and delicate, and I fear you are too closely shut up in that school room. If there is any thing I can do to make your situation more pleasant, I beg you will let me know. They call me cross, and say the old man is dead to all the sympathies of the world, but don't you believe a word of it. There are plenty of young men about, who have harder hearts than I, I can tell you."

Thus passed away the first month of my residence at the home of the Woodvilles. Gradually I was becoming contented, though I still longed for my mother and darling brother. I had written two letters, and as yet had received no reply. One day, Octave came in, and said he was going to town, and asked who wanted him to bring them a letter?

"I do, if you please," said I.

"Well, I'll see what I can do for you, but I don't believe there will be any for you. Your mother has forgotten all about you by this time, depend upon it."

Octave started upon his ride. It was Saturday, and there was no school. The day was warm and pleasant and we carried chairs out, and sat upon the porch.

Flora and Laurestina had often made me promise I would dress them a doll, and I was now busily engaged redeeming my promise. To see the delight of the children, as one by one I finished their articles of dress, and at last proceeded to dress them, was pleasure enough for me, but my heart was not in my work. I was watching eagerly the return of Octave. I firmly believed he would have a letter for me, and I could not repress my impatience, as hour after hour passed by and still he tarried. Night came on, and the bell rang for supper.

We took our places around the table. Mrs. Woodville said to me, kindly,

"I am afraid our quiet life is not one to make you happy, Miss Walton. You are looking very pale, this evening."

"Indeed, madam, I cannot complain of any feeling of unhappiness, save only in the necessary separation from my family. I should be indeed ungrateful to you for all your kindness if I displayed a fretful or discontented spirit."

"Do you think you could be happy to live always in the country, and never see the city again?" asked Mr. Woodville.

"I should, certainly, upon some easy conditions, for indeed I think there is far more real pleasure in the quiet, peaceful life you lead. Oh, I am sick and often have been of the bustle and ceaseless din of the city. There is a something in its changing life that palls upon

the spirit, and I have often felt, when I have only left it for a few hours, and have wandered amid the romantic and sheltered walks of Greenwood, how sweet and soothing it would be to rest forever in the forest glades of my dear native land, and never more breathe the hot fevered air of New York. I love the flowers, the grass, and the sweet singing birds, and last, but not least, the deep-shaded wildwood."

"Well, it is a better life, I think, myself, if you are not too far removed from the advantages of education, news of the day, &c."

"Oh yes, Uncle, you could not get along without your papers every day," said Albert.

"What can keep Octave so late?" asked Mr. Woodville. "He has had plenty of time to go to D. and back. I guess he has fallen in with some gay company."

"There he is, now," said his mother.

And in fact, upon the still evening air, his clear voice rang out:

"April, take my horse."

In another moment he entered the room. I looked at him eagerly, but did not like to rise to go to him. He said, carelessly,

"Don't look at me, I have got nothing for you."

He sat down to his supper. Ah, how my heart sank within me. I could not account for my mother's silence. I feared she might be ill. I knew better than to believe she had forgotten me. I could as soon have doubted

an angel, as the tender affection of my beloved mother.

Octave finished his supper, and laid back in his chair. "How sad Miss Walton looks," said he.

I sat resting my head on my hand. I felt dispirited. So much so indeed that though I heard what he said, I had no heart to answer.

"Come, come," said he, "what would you give me for a letter?"

"You can't make me believe, now, that you have got one."

"I can't, aye—what are those?"

Saying this, he held up two letters.

Laurestina stole noiselessly behind him, seized the letters, and brought them to me. They were indeed mine, and you may imagine how fondly I kissed the one directed in my mother's handwriting. It brought me the pleasant tidings that my brother and herself were in excellent health, and as happy as they could be in my absence. It contained much good advice, and wound up with her blessing. The second letter was from my teacher, who having known me from childhood, naturally felt interested in my welfare. After writing me a long letter, she proved that it was written by a woman, by adding a postcript. The contents of said postcript puzzled me not a little. They ran as follows:

"A certain young gentleman, who often saw you at church, and who had constantly annoyed me for an introduction to you, is in despair at finding you

gone to the South. He begged me to warn you not to get married out there, without indeed you would insure your own happiness by so doing. If you could hear the way he goes on, I do think, calm as you are, it would move you. He made me get all the letters you had written to your mother, and read them to him; and he even insisted on taking copies of them, but to this I objected without you would grant your consent."

Such was the postscript of my teacher's letter, and I well knew that the gentleman, whoever he might be, must be an excellent man, or her ideas of propriety would never have suffered her to mention him to me. I could not make out who it could be, and I found myself interested in one who liked me so much. Now, I am not writing a love-sick story, and I think that the trash which is every day dished up for the young girls of the present generation, does more harm in filling their heads with romantic nonsense, and unfitting them for the calm, sober and matronly duties of life, than all good common sense writers can hope to improve; yet, it must not be supposed that I shall exclude love from my book. A pure and holy affection is the guiding star of existence. Love knits together the whole human family; holds in golden chains the parent and the child, the wife and the husband; and more than all beside, unites the poor feeble creature to its maker, God. Marriage is the appointed lot of woman; and blessed

with the holy ties of husband and children, she reaches the perfection of human happiness. You will excuse me, then, when I confess that I was interested in this stranger, whom I had never seen, for I well knew my teacher would have buried forever such a secret, could she have supposed the slightest blame to be attached to the feeling. I was a young girl of eighteen, and the idea of being fondly remembered, pleased me. Ah, could I have forseen the dark future, I would have crushed the sentiment at its birth; but like many another before me, I was rushing thoughtlessly on to the rock that would founder my fragile bark. Oh, could some warning voice have whispered in my ear, ere it was too late; but there was no voice. Alas! none. Do you expect that my life has turned out happy—that my note-book records joyful events — that my way-side is strewn with flowers? Do not hope it, but profit by the way-marks I point out to you, and rest not your heart and its affections too surely upon earth; for alas, the gilded bauble will vanish at your touch, the fruit will turn to bitter ashes in your mouth. Would to God I had the power of turning one human soul from sin, and the "way-marks in the note-book of the wanderer," would not be written in vain.

"Miss Walton seems pleased with her letter," said Octavê.

"I don't know why you should object to that," observed Mr. Woodville, crossly.

"I didn't say I did object to it," returned Octave, snappishly. "I said—

"I am certainly pleased to get tidings of my mother, and I think you would be, if you were away from her."

"Quite likely—but were both those letters from your mother—the last one, for instance?"

"No," said I, blushing—"one was from my teacher."

"Do they employ male teachers altogether, in New York?" he asked, carelessly; and I, not seeing his drift, answered, "not always."

"I am glad grandma did not get a gentleman to teach us," said Gregory, with a roguish smile.

"Why so?" asked Mrs. Woodville.

"Because he would have whipped us all, whether we deserved it or not. Mr. Spicer used to whip us every morning; and one morning, when one of the boys asked him what he was going to whip him for, he told him he did not know, but that if he had not done any thing to merit it, he would be certain to, before night."

"Hard logic," said Mrs. Woodville. "Octave, what ails you?—you look as if your headache was coming on."

"It don't matter much if it does—I may as well have that as any thing else."

"Nonsense, my son, how you talk."

"Don't mind Octave," said Mr. Woodville, peevish-

ly—"young men are always fretting or finding fault about something. Mary Jones has been frowning on him, I dare say; but it will not take him long to forget her. There is seldom any stability in these high-flown temperaments."

"Confound Mary Jones. Much I care for her frowns or smiles—the heartless flirt."

"Oh, uncle!" said Flora, "that's a pretty way to talk about your wife that is to be. You told me she was to be my aunt, and asked me how I should like to have an aunt Mary."

"I say a good many things, Flora, when the days are long; when they are short, I say more at night."

"My son," said Mrs. Woodville, solemnly, "you should not jest upon such serious subjects. I regret that any thing should have occurred to put you out of humor. Mary, put the children to bed."

As soon as they had left the room, she continued—

"If you expect your wife to be respected, you should never speak of her in that manner, even though it be in jest. Remember, it may one day be repeated to her, word for word."

"I don't care if it is. I say again, confound Mary Jones—she will never be my wife."

"Why have you changed your mind so suddenly, my son?"

"I have been some time changing my mind. It is nothing hasty. Mary Jones is a very good girl in

her way, but I tell you once for all, I've broken with her."

"Octave, is this acting honourably?"

"A Woodville never acts otherwise," said the young man, proudly.

"Perhaps you intend to be an old bachelor, like myself?" suggested Mr. Woodville.

"I have no such thoughts at present, I assure you, uncle. When the marrying fit comes on me, I shall go to the North for a wife; so don't talk to me any more about Mary Jones—that affair is all settled."

Mrs. Woodville exchanged glances with her brother, and a look of deep meaning passed between them. At that time, in the innocence of my heart, I had no suspicion of their thoughts. Now, alas! my eyes are opened, and I see—I see—but what I see, you must not know as yet.

CHAPTER IV.

One lovely afternoon I dismissed my school, and walked slowly up to the house alone. I was in a sad humor; so sad that I had waited for the children to get out of sight before I left the school room. Even their little joyous prattling annoyed me, for my heart was pining for the dear ones at home. As I crossed the porch, Octave came out and met me. He said—

"Would you be afraid to ride out behind my horses this evening, Miss Walton?"

"Why afraid?" I asked.

"There is no other lady in Georgia who would ask that question. My horses are high-spirited animals, and are the terror of the surrounding country. They have, indeed, to speak frankly, a most unenviable reputation."

"I do not fear them in the least."

"Did you ever see them?"

"Oh yes, I have been in the stable many a time in the morning before you were up, and they have eaten out of my hand. I won Grey Eagle's heart at once, with a kiss, but it was more than a week before I could bring Bill's Wife to terms. She likes me now, and I should not be afraid to drive them fifty miles, if my own strength would hold out."

"What, you have been in the stable, and gone near enough to those horses to let them kick you? Oh, Miss Walton, how daring!"

"Not at all. A horse is my especial delight. I would rather have one for a pet than all the dogs, cats, and birds in the country."

"And you will drive, two in hand, this afternoon?"

"Certainly, if you desire it."

"You don't know what you are saying, but I will take you at your word. Here comes April with the buggy—permit me to hand you in."

"Let me run in first, and ask Mrs. Woodville's permission."

In a moment I returned. He led me gallantly along, handed me in, sprang up and seated himself at my side. He drove the horses to the head of the avenue, out of his mother's sight, and then, coming to a dead halt, handed me the reins. I had by this time seen enough of the horses to make me repent of my temerity. I said I would rather not drive.

"Oh, but you must," said Octave. "It is too late to retract now. Come, take the reins."

I made up my mind to do any thing rather than be laughed at. I took the reins—but here a new difficulty arose. My hands were so small that I was obliged to hold one rein in each hand. I drove six miles without stopping. The horses flew along before the wind. They were superb animals—large, nobly built, iron gray in color, and perfectly symmetrical in shape. They had never before submitted to any hand but their master's, and I felt it to be a dangerous experiment; but the southern and western horses are, like their masters, polite, generous and kind to the ladies, and I must confess the noble animals treated me with that courtesy to which I was entitled as a lady, though not as a very proficient driver.

At the end of the six miles, I asked if I had driven far enough to prove my courage?

"Yes," said Octave, "when you have driven back again."

I looked appealingly, but Octave's face expressed nothing but a sneer. I hesitated no longer, but dexterously turning round drove back as rapidly as before. We reached the inner gate, and throwing the reins to April, I gave my hand to Octave and sprang out. Never was I more delighted to get out of a scrape. I ran through the garden and up the steps to the portico. At the door I met Mary. She was just coming out. I was struck with the appearance of her face. It was positively fiendish in expression.

"What," said she, through her closed teeth, "back so soon?"

"Oh yes," I replied, "we did not go far."

I passed her and went to my room, and but for subsequent events I should have forgotten all about it. Often afterwards I recalled the terrible expression I read in her countenance, with shuddering.

I took off my gloves, and lo, what a pair of hands was there. Clearly defined across the soft white palms, were two large, black marks. The reins had bruised them so much that I was obliged to call for salt and water to bathe them. The tea bell rang and I went out to supper. Octave saluted me with mock reverence. I professed profound ignorance of his allusions and manner. He said

"Just hear her trying to make believe, by her cool,

self-posessed manner, that she is not proud of the feat she accomplished this evening."

"Indeed," Miss Walton, said Mrs. Woodville, "you Northern ladies have a great deal of courage. I would not trust myself with Octave's horses for a fortune."

"I shall think, after a while, that I am quite heroic, if you continue thus to laud my courage."

"To be sure you are brave," said Gregory. "Uncle John says all kind-hearted people are brave, and he thinks—"

"Never mind what I think," interposed Mr. Woodville.

"I'll tell her all you think, the first chance I get," said Flora, with a gay laugh.

"How do you like riding on horseback?" asked Octave.

"Oh! very much," I exclaimed, and my heart bounded with delight as memory carried me back to the happy hours of childhood, when I had a little pony of my own, and when a kind father's hand had taught me how to guide him.

"I wish you had said so before," remarked Mrs. Woodville, "I have no doubt the exercise would do you good, and Octave has a very fine lady's horse in the stable, that is absolutely getting ruined for want of use."

"Now do get up early to-morrow morning, Miss Walton," said Octave, "and let me have the honor

of taking care of you. I shall be a most excellent squire."

"I have no riding dress," said I.

"There are three or four here. After tea, Mary shall bring them all to you, to take your choice."

Shall I confess it, I was childishly happy at the thought of the morrow's ride. I began to have an affection for Mrs. Woodville, notwithstanding her pride. I said to myself, she has a kind, motherly heart, after all. She had in a thousand ways tried to impress upon me that I was not her equal. My haughty spirit would not tolerate this, and I met her pride, by an equally chilling hauteur. I felt that by birth, education and conduct, I was her equal. I often found myself drawing comparisons between her and my mother, who was, in my estimation, the *beau ideal* of loveliness and aimability. I do not think it was partiality that made me always decide in favor of the latter. She was then, and ever will be, the bright particular star of my existence. Her example has been to me a shining light, leading me on to Virtue, Purity, and Truth. With my whole heart I must say, God bless my mother.

The next morning I rose early, and we started on our ride. The air was clear and bracing, and I returned with rosy cheeks, high spirits, and an appetite for my breakfast. I went to school, and as if to check me for being happy, Albert and Laurestina both behaved badly, and gave me considerable trouble.

They would not learn their lessons, and Laurestina was so playful, that she frolicked around me like a kitten. I could not find it in my heart to scold her. Still I knew that if I fulfilled my duty to her I must be strict. I was obliged to keep them both in, and Albert, seeing I was determined to be obeyed, studied his lesson, and came and repeated it perfectly. I dismissed him, and now remained alone with Laurestina. I am quite certain she regarded me in the light of an ogress, for she cried bitterly, and when I went to her to reason with her on her disobedience, she dropped on her knees, and commenced screaming with all her might.

I sat down beside her, and taking her in my lap, gently smoothed back the wet, tangled curls from her beautiful face. In a tone of voice that was kind, though perfectly cool and self-possessed, I said—

"I am very sorry to see my little Laurestina behave so naughty. It grieves me to the heart."

"Let me go home. Let me go to my mother," she sobbed.

"I cannot do that, my dear child, till you have said your lesson. Only think what an easy one it is, only just six little words to spell."

"It is'nt easy, its hard," sobbed the child. "I can't learn it."

"My little Laurestina must learn it," I answered, firmly. "Don't ever let me hear this word, 'can't,' from that little mouth again. Always say, 'I'll try.'

'I'll try,' achieves wonders, but 'I can't,' never did anything yet. Now let me hear you repeat your lesson. Come, I'll help you. R-A-T—rat. You know what a rat is? There was one tried to get into the safe, last night. Don't you remember?"

Completely won over by the firmness and kindness of my manner, the child learnt her lesson, and in ten minutes knew every word.

I then took the opportunity of talking to her about the temper she had displayed. I told her of her mother, who was dead, and who was an angel in Heaven. I asked her how she would like her to look down and see her little girl behaving so badly. I assured her that it was my belief that God permitted the souls of the just to watch over those they loved on earth, or in other words, to be their guardian angels. I am aware this may be objected to by some, and called a tradition of the Catholic church. I am not a Catholic, but I think many of their rites and traditions are beautiful, and I do not think we have any right, as Christians, to condemn any person on account of the peculiar tenets of their faith. I have, in New Orleans and St. Louis, made the acquaintance of so many liberal-minded, noble-hearted Catholics, that every vestige of prejudice has faded from my mind. Let us have charity with all men, and remember that it is neither Catholic nor Protestant as such that will gain entrance to Heaven. The crystal

gates will open wide to the name of Christian, and sect and tenet will be alike forgotten.

Pardon me if I digress a little here, to speak of that excellent man, that benefactor of the human race; that noble being, whose whole life has been a sacrifice to the God who gave it, Father Matthew. Life would be well worth having when blessed with such fruition as has crowned his labors. Upon his face God has written his approval. A short time ago I heard him lecture to a crowd of some thousands of people. The sight of this man, so forgetful of self, so devoted to the good of others, so mild and gentle to the little children who crowded round him, made a deep impression upon my mind, and created anew the longing I had experienced in earlier years, when I read the story of the noble philanthropist, whose memory is indelibly associated with the Hospice of St. Bernard. Ah, thought I, would to God I might win a crown of such laurels. I shall not then have lived and died in vain.

Laurestina was deebly impressed with what I told her. She seemed to feel a sort of shame (if I may so express it) at the thought of her mother being a witness to her bad behaviour. I have reason to think she still remembers what I told her.

Now, one word in reference to the management of children. How many are there who while that child was screaming with passion, would have taken a whip,

and goaded her already highly excited feelings to madness. What permanant good can be effected by this sort of punishment? Does it convince the judgment? Does it reach the heart? Does it influence for good the after-life of the child? I think not. Better, far better is it to win your way, slowly, firmly and kindly, by influencing the affections, and convincing the judgment of the child, that the end you seek is its own individual good,—that it must either bow in submission to your will, or seal its own unhappiness. Tis true there are times, particularly with boys, when a little wholesome whipping may be advisable, but the punishment should be inflicted some hours, or even days, after the commission of the crime. The temper should cool. The child should be made to feel that you are grieved to be compelled to punish. That it is indeed drinking a bitter cup yourself, to be forced to inflict pain upon your child. In this solemn manner you make an impression upon the better feelings, which in the young are always tender and easily moved. The heart of childhood is indeed the ductile wax in the hands of the moulder, and wo be to them who distort it, and warp it to evil. How much misery might be avoided, how much good might spring up where now is no redeeming trait, if love and gentleness had trained up children, instead of harshness and cruelty; and how many poor, lost souls, forsaken by all the world, steeped in disgrace and shame, loathsome even to themselves, might be saved,

might be redeemed, if some pure being would stretch forth the hand of friendship, and cover with the mantle of charity their many faults; speak soothing words of pity and encouragement, and give them not only bibles and tracts, but bread, to sustain their miserable lives.

I heard, not very long ago, the eloquent and far-famed Mr. Wadsworth, of Troy, preach a sermon for the Home Missionary Society of Philadelphia. It was indeed a masterly effort. He painted true charity in vivid coloring. He asked what was the use of bibles and tracts and religious advice if you did not act up to the precepts you inculcated? He related an instance that had come before the board. A poor, blind man lived with his brother and sister-in-law in a wretched hovel. The brother got sick, and it was to his efforts the family looked for support. They were all old people, and one after another every article of furniture was sold, to obtain bread to keep them from starving. The blind man was an infidel. An open reviler of the bible, of christians, and of the church of God. By and by winter came on in all its severity. The cold blasts pierced through and through the home and hearts of the suffering family. Some benevolent person made their case known to the Society. That excellent man, Mr. Street, went to see them. It was a spectacle that touched his heart. He spoke soothing words, and left them to fulfil his errand of mercy. He sent them beds to sleep upon, fire to keep them

warm, groceries and provisions to satisfy the cravings of hunger, and various little articles of comfort and necessity, too numerous to mention. Then he went to see them again, this time taking with him a bible and some tracts. "Who are you," asked the blind man, "that has done so much for us? Why have you given us all these things?" "For the love of Christ, whom I worship," said Mr. Street. "In his name we, who are His humble followers, seek out the poor and needy, and relieve their wants. It was the work He gave us to do, for when He was on earth, He went about doing good. Here is a bible that will tell you of His boundless love for poor sinners. Shall I read it to you?"

"Oh yes, read, read. There must be something in this religion, that makes you so good to the poor and wretched, from whom you can expect no sort of recompense."

The blind man was converted. Thus an immortal soul was gathered to the fold of Christ, that would otherwise have been forever lost. "Ah," said Mr. W. "there is something sublime and noble in this union of bibles and bread, tracts and firewood." And there is a sublimity in it, for it is the union of the two great fundamental principles of the christian religion, faith and good works. Try as you will, you can never separate them with good to yourself, and with a lively faith you will be certain to abound in good works. This world is passing away. Soon, very soon, we

shall be called upon to leave alike its joys and sorrows. Oh let us try to do all the good we can. If we can bring joy to one sorrowing heart, if we can save one misguided soul from ruin, if we can plant even one seed that may spring up and bloom in Paradise, oh! let us labor while we may, and strive hard to cultivate all the gentler feelings of our nature, that we may become more and more like the shining example of our most blessed Lord and Saviour. How much more quietly we shall lie down upon our bed of death: How much more easily will the gates of Heaven unclose at our approach.

* * * * * * * *

Time passed on, and nature's roses bloomed once more on my cheeks. I rode out on horseback every day with Octave, and he was as kind and attentive as I could have expected a brother to be. I felt grateful to him, and began to love his mother more and more. She was so happy when I was pleased, and seemed to delight in seeing me gay and cheerful.

One day, as we rode slowly along a winding path, Octave said to me,

"Miss Walton, you have entirely won my mother's heart. She acknowledges that you have completely eradicated her prejudices against the Northerners."

"It makes me happy to hear it," I replied.

"Do you think you could content yourself to stay here a year, without going home to see your family?"

"I don't know. If I cannot get away, I must try to make a virtue of necessity. I will strive hard for contentment."

"I will do all I can to make you happy," he said.

"Indeed, you always have done that, ever since I came here, and I assure you I am not ungrateful for all your many acts of kindness and atention."

"It is not gratitude I ask from your heart," he said.

I looked at him quite puzzled. Love, with all its enigmas, its hopes and fears, was as yet a sealed book to me; nor had I yet seen the person who could unfold its mysteries to me. It was surely not Octave Woodville. He had inspired me, from the first moment of our acquaintance, with distrust. I did not know then that he loved me, but I do now. He, the petted, courted child of fortune, the heir to an immense estate, loved the poor, portionless Northerner, the hired teacher of his sister's children. Yes, loved her with an honorable passion, and would have deemed that, the proudest moment of his life in which he could have called her wife.

We had reached the top of a hill that overlooked the country, far and near. The prospect was charming. "Come," said I, "let's have a gallop over this lovely plain," and starting off, I soon left him far behind. When he caught up to me, the moon was shining, and the quiet stars looked down upon me, and warned me of the coming night.

"I never dreamed it was so late, did you?" I asked.

"No, little flatterer, who would think of time in your company."

"Oh, let us return. I am so frightened. How far are we from home?"

"Seven miles."

"You are jesting?"

"That is Carrol's place to the right."

"Is it possible? Well, indeed, I would not have believed it."

We cantered briskly home. As usual, Mary met us on the porch. Her eyes gleamed wildly, and the old expression was on her face, as she said in a hissing tone,

"Old missus has been so scared about you."

"Did she think we had run off?" asked Octave, with a gay laugh.

Mary muttered something that I did not hear. I passed on, and was going to my room, when something, I know not what, induced me to turn. Octave still stood on the porch, and, could it be true? yes, it was; I surely saw it with my own eyes; Mary, the pretty yellow slave, stood before him, and her arms were thrown wildly around him. Her head rested on his shoulder. I was amazed. I knew not what to think, but I had sense enough to hasten away before they saw me.

As soon as I had laid off my riding habit, I went down to supper. I advanced to Mrs. Woodville and said,

"Pardon me, dear madam, for keeping you waiting so long. I will never do so again. Indeed the time passed so rapidly, that it was night before I was aware of it."

She looked at me fixedly for a moment, and then said, grasping my hand as she spoke,

"You are perfectly excusable, my child, and if ever truth and innocence were written on a human face, I read it here. You have no apology to offer, my dear Marcia, if you will permit me to call you so."

"Oh do," said I, delighted, "that will make me think I am home once more."

"And shall I have the privilege too?" asked Mr. Woodville, smiling pensively.

"Certainly, if you wish it," I replied.

"Well, then, to begin at once, Marcia, will you permit me?" and he handed me to the table.

"I want to call you Marcia, too," said Laurestina.

"And I," "and I," "and I," chimed in all the others.

"Oh we cannot permit that," said Mrs. Woodville. "If we do, we shall have no order at school."

"I would obey Marcia as quickly as I would Miss Walton," said Flora, pouting.

"Well," said I, "we will make a compromise. In school I will be Miss Walton. Out of it, if you are good children, I will be Marcia to you all."

"Oh, I am so glad," said Laurestina. "Marcia, please hand me the biscuit."

"I like it too," said Gregory. "Did you have a pleasant ride, Marcia?"

"Very pleasant, thank you."

"Come children, eat more and talk less," said Mrs. Woodville. "Octave, what ails you. You don't eat any supper?"

"I don't feel hungry."

"Are you sick?"

"No. Yes. I have a slight head-ache." He leaned his head on his hand. Was he angry that of all that family party, he alone was excluded from the privilege of calling me by my first name? So Mr. Woodville seemed to think, for he said,

"How now, boy; you want to say Marcia, too, do you? Ten to one you think it a very pretty name."

He raised his eyes, and gave his uncle a look not easily forgotten. In an instant it was gone, and without answering the question Mr. Woodville had addressed to him, he said to his mother, in a gay tone,

"I am not hungry and don't want any supper, but after a while, Miss Walton may, if she pleases, make us some egg-nog. I am just in the humor of drinking and making merry."

"Will you oblige Octave?" said his mother to me.

"Certainly, if you desire it," I replied.

At nine o'clock the egg-nog was made. I served it out, and Jacob carried it round. I had never been partial to the taste of brandy, and soon sat down

my glass. Octave advanced towards me. He took up my tumbler, and holding it up to the light, turned it round till he came to the spot which my lips had touched. He raised it to his mouth, kissed it and drained its contents. No one saw the movement save myself, and a pair of lustrous black eyes, that leered at him from the corner of the room. It was Mary, who sat there at a little work-table mending some clothes for the children. Oh what a look she gave me. I shuddered in spite of myself, and turned away my head. For the first time I felt a restraint in Octave's presence. I did not interpret his kissing the glass in any way but as a little harmless flattery, but I felt annoyed and unusually depressed, and I resolved to retire to my room at once, and gain in solitude that quiet which was necessary to the restoration of my health. But my head pressed a sleepless pillow. A presentiment of evil hung over me and darkened my spirits. The large brilliant black eyes of the pretty yellow slave, haunted my imagination, and pursued me in my dreams. It was near morning when I slept, and the breakfast bell rang without my hearing it.

Somebody tapped at my door. I arose and opened it. Flora stood there, and I told her to come in. She held in her hand a superb boquet of flowers. She said,

"See what uncle Octave has sent you. He was up before day, and rode five miles to Dayne's green house, to get you these flowers."

"How very kind," I exclaimed, taking them, and inhaling their fragrance. I then placed them in a vase of fresh water.

"Did you know breakfast was waiting?" asked Flora.

"Certainly not, can it be possible?"

"It is, indeed, and you have not commenced to dress yourself yet."

"Never mind. Sit still, and you shall see how soon I will be ready."

In a few moments I accompanied Flora to the dining room, where the family were already seated at breakfast. I looked at Octave to thank him for his gift, and was struck by the pallor of his face.

"Are you sick?" I asked.

"I only have a head-ache."

"There," said Mrs. Woodville, "I knew it. I saw last night it was coming on; and that ride this morning did you no good." She looked at me with a reproachful air.

"An early ride has often cured me before."

"Yes, but not on a damp, heavy morning, like this."

Octave rose from the table and went to his room. The meal passed in silence, and soon after we left for school. At dinner time I did not see Octave, and as his name was not mentioned I did not inquire about him. I remained in the school room that night, till nearly dark, busily engaged at my French exercises.

I was indeed so entirely engrossed, that I took no note of the flight of time.

Some one tapped at the door, and I bade him enter.

Mr. Woodville came in and said,

"Really, Marcia, this will not do. I am afraid some accident will happen to you here. Are you not aware there are many runaway negroes in the woods, prowling about? Men who would not hesitate at any crime, not even murder."

"I never thought of that," said I, shuddering. "It seemed to me I was removed from all the danger so common in great cities."

I was very soon ready to accompany Mr. Woodville up to the house. I went to my room, took off my bonnet, and came out to supper. Octave was there, lying on the sofa. He was as white as death. He fixed his eyes upon me with a sad expression, and I asked him how he felt.

"Better," was his only word of answer.

After eating my supper, I brought out my work basket and sat down to my sewing. Octave said,

"Miss Walton, shall I trouble you to bathe my head? I can get no relief from this intolerable pain in any other way."

"I shall consider it a pleasure rather than a trouble, if I can do aught to soothe you."

I got cold water and bathed his throbbing temples and fevered brow. I nursed him as a sister might

have waited on a brother, and I am very sure no feeling entered my heart but pity, such as an angel might have felt.

"Does that relieve you?" I asked, bending over him.

"Oh, very much," he replied. "Are you tired? Do not leave me without you are."

"Certainly not, if it affords you any gratification for me to stay."

Ten o'clock came. Mrs. Woodville begged Octave to permit Mary to bathe his head. She pleaded that I must be tired.

"I don't want Mary to come near me," he said, crossly. Then asked me, gently, "Are you tired, though?"

"Not much," I replied. "I am used to waiting on the sick. Mother thinks me quite a good nurse."

"Well, I must not forget in my selfishness that you are not much more than an invalid yourself. Go, now, and get a good night's rest. I shall be well to-morrow, for there is a charm in the touch of your fingers. I am better than I have been all day."

"I shall retire then in the hope of seeing you quite recovered in the morning. *Bon-soir.*"

And away I went to my neat little room, to lay my head down for the last time on my pillow, ere the crisis of my life had arrived. One scene of the drama had been acted, and the curtain was now falling, which would separate, with an iron land-mark the

Past and Present. God alone knows *why* such things are permitted. We feel them, we suffer, yet remain in ignorance of their use; but God knows best, and I will not repine. With a cheek blooming with health, a heart rich in all the gilded visions of Hope, and a soul pure and uncontaminated by evil, and devoted to God, I laid down to sleep, the last sweet dreamless rest of a happy childhood.

I awoke, to what? You shall learn it in another chapter.

CHAPTER V.

"Oh, turn away those rigid eyes!
My heart hath frozen 'neath their spell;
Such looks are not the meet replies
To one who loveth thee so well.

One smile—ah, one frank tender smile,
Were than a thousand gems more dear,
If it but told my heart the while,
That I had power thy thoughts to cheer."

I know not to what to attribute my depression this morning. There is a weight on my spirits. There is sorrow at my heart. I feel the invisible presence of something that I fear and dread. I will go forth and inhale the fresh dewy air of the morning. It may bring calm and quiet to my fevered brow.

Well, out I go. I choose this morning the walk at the back of the house; and I slowly descend the hill till I reach the little stream at its base. I wander along its verdant margin, stooping now and then to gather the modest violets that peep forth from the turf. Oh, what a lovely day! The air is mild and balmy; and the ever-green woods around me, declare me to be in a land where reigns an eternal summer. The birds merrily warble their hymns of love and gratitude. All nature seems to rejoice, and I ask myself, "Why art thou, of all the gay things around thee, unhappy? Oh, daughter of earth, why dost thou suffer aught to come between thee and the love of the Infinite?"

Suddenly, a voice interrupted my musings. It was Octave's. He said—

"Am I not a true prophet? I told you I would be well this morning. Lo, the morning is here, and I surely never felt better in my life."

"I am happy to hear it."

"And yet, to tell the truth, you do not look very happy. What ails you, Miss Walton? Have you any cause for trouble?"

"On the contrary, I had never more cause for joy. My health is returning, and I feel strong and hearty. Indeed, nothing is the matter with me, save some imaginary nonsense."

"Pray, tell me, what sickly fancies have been disturbing you? Perchance I may cure them."

"They would be beyond your reach, for I do not know what they are myself?"

"Well, we will banish them, then. Let us talk of something else."

"Certainly, if you desire it."

"Are you fond of flowers?"

"Passionately."

"Come, sit down here at the foot of this tree. I had this bench placed here for my own accommodation. I little dreamed, in those days, that a fair Northerner would ever grace it with her presence."

"Is this a favorite spot of yours?"

"It is, indeed. I spend many happy, and many miserable hours here. Now, come, answer me a question. Can you read the language of flowers?"

"Perfectly well."

"Do you remember the interpretation of the boquet I sent you yesterday?"

"Indeed, I do not. I never stopt to think."

"There was keliatrope—what does that mean?"

"Devotion."

"There were many violets."

"Violets are interpreted faithfulness."

"The sweet blue-bell was there."

"Oh yes, that means constancy."

"There was the fragrant, lovely rose-bud."

"Come, come. I have no notion of being turned into a botanical dictionary. If you wish to become versed in the floral world, get a book and apply your-

self diligently," said I, laughing. Octave said, seriously—

"I did not ask you these questions on account of my ignorance, Miss Walton. Far from it. I had these flowers selected with great care, that you might read in them what my lips so longed to speak, but dared not. Sweet Marcia, you have awakened in my breast emotions so overpowering that I am no longer master of myself. I am completely entranced and spell-bound, and I feel that I only live in your presence. I have struggled against this passion, well knowing that it would meet my mother's disapprobation; and I have watched you closely, but have never yet received one word or look of encouragement from you. Dearly loved girl, speak that word, look that one look of affection now, to reward me for my love. Nay, do not turn away your head. Take time to consider before you repulse me. My heart is wholly yours. I offer you now my hand, and my fortune would be valueless if not shared with you. Why do you rise? Why do you look at me so strange and cold? Am I then deceived in you? Are you heartless? Are you without pity for one who loves you with such wild devotion as mine?"

"Indeed, Mr. Woodville, I cannot find words to express to you my surprise. I never dreamed of this. I have the kindliest feelings for you, but if, by any action of mine, you have been led to believe that I anticipated this avowal on your part, I humbly beg

your pardon. I never loved any one enough to wish to be married to him, and I always thought that you were engaged to be married to Mary Jones. I knew there was some slight difference between you, but I supposed it to be some trifling lovers' quarrel. You have been very kind to me, but I attributed it to the kindness of your heart. I am poor and lonely, far from my home and friends, and oft times very sad. I fancied that you knew all this, and that the generosity of your nature induced you to offer me attentions to lighten my load of sorrow—attentions which I should have blushed to receive, had I imagined them prompted by any other feeling. Pardon me, if under the influence of gratitude I have for one moment seemed other than I am. I shall ever esteem you highly, but your wife I can never be. I speak firmly and decidedly, for my mind is fixed, and I need no time to think about it. Let us return to the house."

"Oh, Marcia, I entreat you not to go yet. Stay one moment. Let me implore you to think over my offer. At least give me some better reason for your refusal. Is there not some one who possesses the treasure of your virgin heart?"

"Do you wish to insult me, sir? If I was loved, it should be no hidden thing. I would accept no love it was necessary to hide. I left the school-room, and my mother's bosom, to come to your house. I am but just eighteen, and my mother educated me to consider myself still a child at that age. It is not neces-

sary to pursue this subject farther. I have frankly told you the truth, and it is useless for you to suppose that time can change my feelings in the least."

A slight rustling in the woods here attracted my attention. Octave said it was nothing. I walked towards the house. He insisted on walking with me, though I would much rather have dispensed with his company. In a few moments we met Flora and Mr. Woodville coming towards us. Flora's eyes were bright, and her cheeks were rosy with health. Mr. Woodville said to me—

"Well, Marcia, you are taking your early walk, I see; but you look pale. Come here, and lean on an old man's arm. It is an arm that would gladly shield you from all the evil this world has in store for you. Flora, do you trip on before with your uncle Octave. Oh, you must have your kiss before you go, aye. If I was Miss Walton, I would not permit it."

I asked—

"Why do you think, Mr. Woodville, that this world has evil in store for me?"

"It is the lot of all mortals, my dear child. God has placed us here to prepare for another and happier state of being, and it is to be feared that the affections of our weak and sinful natures would bind us irretrievably to earth, if sorrow and trouble were not our portion, and if we found this world aught else but a vale of tears."

"But why, I have often asked myself, did God per-

mit sin to come into the world? He is certainly omniscient, and He knew that sin was the parent of sorrow and death."

"What merit would there be in doing well, in living a holy life, if there were no inducements, no temptations to act otherwise? That man would achieve no victory who had no foe to vanquish. And again, how many virtues are there, that but for the opposing influence of sin, would sleep in embryo? We should not question whatever there is of mystery in the works of God, but bow submissively to His will, in the full confidence that He knows what is best for us. Our finite minds cannot comprehend the wonders of His love, and we must not expect, in this vale of tears, to pierce the impenetrable mystery with which His works are surrounded."

"Ah, believe me, my dear friend, I do not lack that faith and confidence of which you speak. I know full well that all God does is for the best, although it may seem hard to me, and the questions I have asked myself, have been rather the inquisitive promptings of an inquiring mind, than any actual doubt of the wisdom and beneficence of God. I have often sought to make clear all the mysteries of religion to my own mind, in order that I might the better explain it to my pupils, and I have been more especially interested in this, on account of having been, since my fourteenth year, a teacher in a Sabbath school."

"This is a laudable feeling, in some respects, my

dear child, but I would advise you to go no farther than God has revealed Himself to you in His Holy Word. Study faithfully and patiently all you find there, and your soul will then be fitted to enjoy the happiness which shall be yours, in that Land of Promise God has prepared for His children."

"Ah, my friend, now we have gained a point that has often caused me great trouble, for I fear I shall never reach that happy land of which you speak. My heart clings to earth and sin, in its many thousand forms, allures my wandering footsteps. My spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak, and to be worthy of that blessed recompense, is to be far more holy, more earnest and more faithful, than I ever can be."

"Nay, but you must not say so, Marcia. I too have often had my fears that I could never sufficiently overcome the weaknesses that flesh is heir to, to inherit eternal life. When I was a young man, about the age Octave is now, I was engaged to be married to one of the loveliest girls in Georgia. She was fair as you, Marcia, and I loved her as man can never love but once. She was entwined about my heart strings, and day and night I thought and dreamed about her, cherishing the fondest visions of future happiness in the possession of so peerless a wife. I left her and went forth to battle with my country's foes, for the freedom which seems the birthright of the American. While absent from home,

a young British officer, who had been severely wounded, was picked up by the father of my betrothed and carried to his home. Ellen nursed him through a long and severe illness, forgot her sacred vows to me, gave her heart to my rival—and—and—I returned to find her the wife of another. Would to God I could obliterate from the page of memory that fatal hour. She, that I loved and trusted, was false, and her falsehood made me a misanthrope, a dark scowling miserable being in my youth, and in my old age a querulous, fault-finding old man that nobody loves, and every body either hates or fears."

"Do not say so, dear Mr. Woodville. I, for one, neither hate nor fear you. You have been very kind to me, and let others change as they will, you have always met me with smiles and words of encouragement. Indeed, but for you, my lonely position here would have been far less tolerable."

"Say you so, Marcia? Well, well, that will be some cause for joy in the old man's heart. I know not why, my dear child, but I liked you the first moment I saw you. Your pale, sad face, your gentle, modest manners, and your evident devotion to your mother and brother, all interested me in you, and I have since then had ample opportunity to satisfy myself that my interest was not misplaced; but I am wandering from my subject. To resume my argument where I left off, I must say that this misanthropic state of mind was my besetting sin. The best

years of my life were spent in brooding over my wrongs, and I constantly encouraged and nurtured all the evil feelings of my heart. I viewed all mankind through a jaundiced medium, and a long time elapsed ere I was awakened to the sin I was committing against God and my fellow creatures. The hour of repentance came at last, and in my feeble efforts to undo the past, and become a blessing instead of a curse to my race, I have experienced the only emotions of happiness allowed me to cheer my down-hill journey to the tomb. Oh! believe me, my child, the man who forgets his duty to God and to his fellow man, who closes his heart to the appeal of suffering humanity, and who believes it is no business of his, if half the world starve or freeze, so he justly liquidates all the claims that honor and the laws of his country bid him recognize; that man, I say, is a debtor to his God, and he shall be weighed in the balance and found wanting; and, at a bar where impartial justice is administered, he will receive his doom."

"I have often wondered why it is that the hearts of the rich are so hard. I think it would be the greatest joy of my life to do good, if I had it in my power. One day when I made the same remark to my teacher, she told me 'the fuller the purse got the tighter the strings were drawn,' and I suppose it must be the case, but I don't think the possession of riches could ever harden my heart to the sufferings of the poor."

"Ah! child, you know not the deceitfulness of

the human heart. It is impossible to judge, if your circumstances should change, if your heart would not change also. Poor human nature, how frail it is. How its best resolves, its wisest precautions, are often overturned in a moment, and the long pent-up and restricted emotions of years burst their bonds and carry all before them. Well, well, life at the best is a moving panorama, abounding in light and shade, and it seems to me the dark spots are far more prominent than the bright."

"Surely this, then, is one of the bright spots, for here is the end of our walk, and a happy, happy home this seems to be. Good morning, Mrs. Woodville; I hope we have not kept you waiting breakfast for us."

"That would not have been a capital crime, even if you had."

"Laurestina, where is my kiss? Coming, aye? I thought you would not deprive me of it. Indeed, I don't know how I should get along without it. Boys, why have you not been out this morning?"

"Our lessons are so hard that we have been up ever since six o'clock studying them. We had no time to go out."

"You would have had plenty of time, if you had studied last evening, instead of playing. My motto has always been 'work first and play afterwards.'"

"Come to breakfast," said Jacob, and in we went. Mary handed me my coffee. I tasted it, and begged her to put some more sugar in it. I have always had

a fashion of sipping my coffee, and getting it quite to my taste before I began my breakfast. When I had finished eating, I drank the whole cup-full at once.

Mary brought me the sugar bowl and I sweetened to my taste. I then ate a hearty breakfast, talked with the children, and began to throw off the uneasy sensations I had experienced an hour before. Octave looked at me fixedly, as if to chide me for what he doubtless supposed my heartlessness, whereas I acted carelessly, with the sole desire of putting him at his ease. I raised my cup to my lips and drank it every drop. I looked at Mary. She was standing opposite to me, and behind Mrs. Woodville's chair. The old expression was in her face now, and a strange, wild light was in her eyes. All at once the conviction flashed itself upon me that she was crazy. Before I had time to pursue the thread which this suggestion opened before me, a horrible pain seized me. My brain seemed to be on fire. My head swam, my temples throbbed with all the maddening fever of delirium. A burning sensation, as of coals of fire in my stomach, filled me with the most intense agony. I know my face was pale as ashes. My compressed lips were livid as those of a corpse. I felt as though death, in its last dread agony, was upon me, and all at once the truth flashed like a meteor across my mind. I rose from the table, staggered to the sofa, and, as I threw myself with all the superhuman might of despair upon it, I screamed out, in tones of horror,

"God of Heaven, have mercy upon me! *I am poisoned!*

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We will here make some extracts from Mr. Woodville's diary, in order to pursue the thread of our story.

FEBRUARY 5th.—In the lonely silence of my chamber I have sought in vain for rest; but, alas, the horrors of this day have banished peace and quiet. Would that I could forget even for an hour, the torture that is racking our poor Marcia. Poor, lonely girl; far from her home and all she holds most dear, and suffering thus for a crime committed by another. Thou knowest, oh God, why she must pay the penalty of what she is innocent of. Ah, Octave, how has that sin of thine early youth returned upon thee, to curse thee in her thou wouldst die to save. I pity thee, poor boy; from my heart, I pity thee.

It is now two o'clock. I will keep my lonely vigil here, for I cannot sleep. I will write all that passes around me, for should she be spared, the events of this period would possess a fearful interest for her. Oh, those long, weary hours that elapsed before the doctor came. I have such fears—should she die—should her soul be called away, and nothing be left of the bright, young creature, that has been a ray of sunshine to my heart, but a loathsome corpse—alas, how shall I tell her mother the sad tale? In

what words could I clothe such intelligence? I confess I shrink from the task. I brought her here, poor delicate girl. She came to seek health and healing in the warm balmy breezes of the sunny South, and she has found a cruel enemy, poison, agony, and it may be an untimely grave. Oh! Thou who hast promised to hear the prayers of those who cry unto Thee, listen this night to the voice of my sorrow, which is torturing my poor heart beyond mortal endurance. I am an old man, and my course is nearly run. She is young, and beautiful, and good. Oh, spare her, and if one must be sacrificed, take me! I cheerfully resign myself. I would die happy in the thought that she would return to be once more the joy of her widowed mother's heart. Oh! God of Heaven, hear my prayer!

Now let me collect my scattered thoughts. First, were the alarm and terror of the whole household, when we found that Marcia had swallowed, in her coffee, a large dose of arsenic. We stood by appalled, while Octave rushed out of the house, saddled his fastest horse, and galloped with incredible swiftness down the avenue, endowed with the superhuman power and energy of love. My sister held her head, bathed her temples, and vainly tried to lull her to rest upon her bosom. Gently, as a mother would have tended her darling child, she nursed her, and proved the truth of what I have often asserted, that after all her heart is in the right place. And then

the children crowded around her, with tears and sobs, all eager to display their affection—for they all love her dearly. Indeed it is strange that she has so completely won all their hearts. But, alas, no one could help loving her that knew her. Poor child, so simple, artless, and confiding, striving always to do the right, and loving, with her guileless heart, the meanest insect God has blessed with life. How Mary could have found it in her power to harm her, I don't know, for there is a sweetness about her that disarms hatred. Oh Marcia! Marcia! child of innocence and truth, would that I could save thee from the tortures that are racking thee. I hear thy piteous moanings, and they touch my heart. I will come to thee, poor sufferer. Perhaps I can do something to comfort thee.

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I have been to her chamber to gaze, in speechless agony, upon the writhing form of the victim. She did not know me. Delirium has veiled her eyeballs; and oh! what a change has come over that fair, young face, in these few short hours. The doctor is there, keeping watch beside her. In answer to my look of inquiry, he shook his head mournfully, oh! so mournfully; as if he feared there was no hope. I felt as if my heart would break. My sister is there, and Octave kneels beside the bed, suffering anguish enough to atone for the crime which is now crushing him with its fearful retribution. He has indeed lived an age of misery in one day. Ah, how fondly he

loves the pallid stricken form that lies before him. How the pent up devotion of his heart swells up to his face, and proclaims, what he no longer seeks to hide. I do not blame him for loving her. Who could help it? Who could help it?

Octave has just called the doctor out, and told him to save her life, to watch over her night and day, till the danger was passed, and he would reward him to the half of his fortune. Alas, poor boy, I fear that gold and science and prayer alike, will fail. There seems a chilling presence here, as if death sat at the bedside. Pray God I may be deceived in my fears.

February 6th. — Day dawned at last, and I hastened to Marcia's chamber. As I drew near the bedside, the doctor approached me, and whispered a sentence in my ear. What words were those he breathed to me? They seemed like droppings from some celestial fountain of eloquence, as they entered my heart, and talismanic-like sent the sluggish blood coursing rapidly though my veins. "There is hope." Sweet words! In the wildness of my joy, I could have kissed the doctor. "There is hope." Three simple words, and yet upon them hung life and death, joy and sorrow, happiness and wo.

I leaned over the reclining form of the fair Marcia. She was sleeping. One snowy arm lay under her head, the other hung by her side. Her beautiful hair was thrown back upon the pillow, and lay a perfect

mass of rich auburn curls. Some little of the warm tide of life was returning to her lovely lips, and her breathing was rather easy. Her violet eyes were closed tightly, and were surrounded by those dark blue circles, so sure an evidence of suffering. The long, black lashes rested on her pale cheek, and she was beautiful still, though wearing the marks of anguish and pain.

My sister sat dozing in an easy chair by the bed side, but Octave still knelt in the same position, and gazed with the same look of intense suffering at the pale face before him. I approached him, and bending down, repeated in his ear the words of the physician. He raised his eyes quickly to mine, and then glanced interrogatively at the doctor, who bowed his head in the affirmative. Joy is as overpowering in its influences as sorrow, and Octave buried his head in the bed clothes, and wept like a child. I was rejoiced to see these tears. I knew they would lessen the fever that was burning at his heart and maddening his brain. As I left the room, I met April who had just returned from the pursuit of the guilty girl, who had been the cause of all this misery. He beckoned me to follow him into the parlor, and when he had quietly closed the door, he said,

"We have got her, massa, safe and sound."

"Where did you find her?" I asked.

"Down in Stokely's woods, but she gin us the greatest chase you ever see. We wouldn't a found

her now, but we got Toby's blood hounds on the scent, and they soon hunted her down. She ran up a tree, and they tore round it and pawed the trunk, and would a teared her to bits if we hadn't a called 'em off. Oh! but she was skared. When we tuk hold of her, she shivered like as if she was a goin' to pieces."

"Where is she now?"

"Back in the kitchen, 'till we find out what to do with her."

"Take her to the cotton gin—bind her hand and foot, and keep two of the plantation boys with her all the time—and remember April, your master, Octave, will look to you for her safe-keeping."

"Trust to me, massa. I'll take good care uv her."

"I don't wish you to be unkind to her—don't taunt her, or suffer others to do so. Do you hear?"

"Yes, massa, I hears and I heeds, though she don't 'serve no such exclemency."

"It is not for you to judge of that, April. Now go, and do as I bid you."

FEBRUARY 7th.—As I sat in the dining room, about eleven o'clock this morning, my sister and Octave entered. Octave said,

"What did you say the doctor told you, mother?"

"He is of opinion that she will recover, but that the effects of the poison will go with her to the grave."

"And this is all my fault. I have brought down upon this young girl's innocent head all this weight of

misery. I have doomed her to an early grave. How can I bear all this patiently? I feel as if it would drive me mad."

"Now, don't, my son, take it so to heart. Rather be thankful that it is no worse."

"Worse! How could it be worse? Alas! what reparation can I offer her—what atonement can I make for all she has suffered?"

"Indeed, I know not. She would scorn money."

"And I would scorn myself for offering it."

"Then I don't know what you can do, but be as kind to her as possible."

"I can make her my wife."

"Marry her? impossible! Such a match is entirely beneath you, my son."

"And why beneath me? On the contrary, I feel that all the condescension would be on her part. Do you object simply because she is poor and I rich? What is it but chance that has made these different distinctions? Marcia is a lady in every sense of the word. She is pure-hearted, gentle and amiable. She is graceful as a gazelle, and beautiful as the morning. What more can you desire in a daughter?"

"I acknowledge that she is all, and even more than you say, but I cannot overcome my prejudices. What will the world say at the intelligence of the rich Octave Woodville, the wealthiest planter in Georgia, having wedded the poor governess, who was hired to teach his sister's children?"

"Let the world talk, and say what it will. Oh! my mother, would you wreck your son's happiness for aught of so little moment? Let those who do not like my bride absent themselves from my house. The great and good would love her, and do her honor; and for the opinion of the multitude, I would not give the snap of my finger. And then you must consider, mother, it is I who have made her suffer. Had it not been for me, this terrible thing would never have happened. Oh! take it home to your own kind heart. Ask yourself what my duty is, aside from all foolish pride, and as a woman and a Christian, I know what your answer must be."

"I know not what to say. What does your uncle think?"

"I think just as Octave does, and I do not believe the world contains a better wife than she would make. She is splendidly educated, has a fine mind, noble sentiments, and fixed principles of right. In addition to this, is the fact that through Octave's own crime, she has been made an invalid for life."

"Do not say a word about that, uncle. God knows how ceaselessly I have upbraided myself for the past. I would willingly atone for the evil I have done with my life, if it could be of any avail. I love Marcia, and I only want your approbation to the match, and I will propose myself to her at once. You want to see me happy, do you not, dear mother?"

"Certainly; there is no object I seek more earnestly

than your happiness, my dear son; but suppose I did give my consent. How could you live secure from that abominable Mary."

"I would sell her off, in some distant State, for a plantation negro."

"Well, if you insist upon it, I suppose I must consent. Marry her, my son, be kind and affectionate to her, and God bless you both."

"Thank you, my dear mother. I knew you had my happiness at heart, and could be easily induced to sacrifice your pride to it. Now, I have removed every obstacle but one, and that I hope you will be able to surmount."

"What is that?"

"Marcia's own consent. I have been led to fear that she positively dislikes me."

"Nonsense! She has too much good sense to refuse such an offer. She has treated you coldly, out of maiden bashfulness, and I like her the better for it."

"I leave it with you, my mother. Plead the cause of your son as if it was his life you sought to save."

FEBRUARY 15th.—Our little Marcia has been gradually improving, and to-day she has been sitting up. It was judged prudent to say nothing to her about the future, but to keep her mind perfectly free from every care. This morning she seemed so bright, my sister thought she might venture on her long-deferred conversation, and she began thus:

"My dear Marcia, I have something of importance to communicate to you. Do you think you can listen to it without taxing your powers too much?"

"Oh, yes, I think I can. I feel quite strong to-day."

"My son loves you, Marcia."

"I assure you, dear madam, I never sought his love."

"I am aware of it, my dear child, and the fact is only one more of the noble traits of your character. Octave loves you, and would make you his wife; and I join my entreaties to his, to implore you not to refuse him. I believe his affection for you is of the purest and most exalted character, and I entreat you to give me some words of encouragement to cheer him in his sorrow, for you know not how he has suffered during your illness."

"I regret very much he has suffered aught on my account, and I am very grateful to him for his exalted opinion of me; but listen to me, and I will give you a decided answer. I deeply feel all your kindness. I love you for it, and I shall never forget it, but I respectfully decline an alliance with your son. You have a right to demand my reasons, and I will, in all truth and sincerity, confess to you that I do not love him. 'Tis true I feel for him an interest. I hope he may be happy and entirely forget me. I think I can conscientiously acquit myself of ever having, by word or deed, offered him any encouragement. I have

never known what it is to love; yet I feel within me the power of loving, and should I ever meet the being that comes up to my idea of manliness, and he woos me as maiden modesty approves, doubtless I shall be won. I deem it but justice to say that I do not now, and never can love your son, and in all humility I relinquish all title to the high honor he has wished to confer on me. After this declaration on my part, it is evident that it would be unpleasant to remain under the same roof with him, and I will therefore prepare to return to my mother, as soon as my strength permits."

"But, Marcia, my dear child, you have not considered the case in all its bearings. This marriage would be an advantageous one. My son is rich. He would be a son to your mother. He would protect and educate your brother."

"Interest will never influence me in the acceptance of a husband. Pardon me for saying it, madam, but you have formed a poor estimate of my character."

"Rather pardon me, my dear child, for supposing, for one moment, that a noble heart like yours could be bought for gold. Oh, my son, my son, what a treasure you have lost."

"Ah, believe me, madam, in a garden of beauty and loveliness like America, your son will not long search in vain for a suitable wife."

"No one can fill your place in his heart, my dear Marcia."

"Let us change the subject. I have some questions to ask of you, if you are willing to answer them."

"Speak, my child. I only wonder that your curiosity did not prompt them before."

"Who administered that deadly drug, that came so near killing me?"

"Mary."

"And why? Surely I never harmed her in thought, word or deed."

"Octave loved you."

"And why should that make her wish to kill me?"

"Can you not guess?"

"I confess I cannot."

"Mary loves Octave herself."

"What! the black slave love her master?"

"Yes; unfortunately, yes."

"But this is a mystery. Why did she act so, unless she had some horrible revenge to gratify?"

"Indeed, Marcia, I scarcely know how to answer you. Your pure soul can not readily conceive the wickedness of the world. But this is a story you have a right to know, even though it makes the mother blush for her son. You came near losing your life by it. Listen then to what I shall repeat to you."

"Nay, madam, nay. Spare yourself any repetition that may be painful to you, and pardon me if I have unwittingly disturbed your serenity of mind. God

forbid that I should give a moments pain to the heart of any mother."

"It is right that you should know the whole truth, Marcia, and I will try to word it so that it may not even offend your chaste ears. This is the story."

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"Oh, madam, this is dreadful. I bitterly reproach myself for having thus stirred the dregs of your cup of sorrow. Pray forgive me."

"Nay, child, it was a duty I owed you. You now understand it all. I may trust to your honor never to divulge it."

"Ah, dear Mrs. Woodville, believe me, you may."

"I trust, Marcia, you will reconsider your intention of leaving us. The children have become attached to you, and brother John will miss you sadly, to say nothing of myself."

"And yet you must admit, Mrs. Woodville, my situation would be unpleasant."

"Oh, not at all. Octave would go to some of his other plantations, and try to learn forgetfulness in absence."

"Do not, for one moment, suppose I would banish your son from his home and your presence, for a single hour. Oh, no, the very thought would make me miserable. Permit me to regain sufficient strength, and I will return at once to my mother."

"My dear, dear Marcia, how it grieves me to see you the victim of that wicked woman. You know not

how seriously your health is undermined by the effects of that poison. It will be some time before you can enter upon the laborious duties of a teacher, and you must permit me to pay you for all the time you lose. Indeed, conscience would not acquit me, if I did not."

"No, madam, I cannot think of receiving anything over my stipulated salary. That was handsome enough, and I firmly decline taking one penny more than I have earned."

"We shall see about that. Now, I must leave you, and go to Octave, who, poor boy, little dreams I come to blight his hopes. I will soon return to you. Don't get lonesome."

"I can't be that in the hope of your speedy return."

"Oh, little flatterer, I go."

"Shall I describe to you poor Octave's feelings when his mother told him that Marcia would not marry him? Shall I dwell upon the sorrow that from that moment clouded his brow? Oh, no; it would be waste of paper. Too many of such descriptions have already been penned. It would be useless repetition. Rather come with me to the chamber of the invalid, and listen to the sweet, sad melancholy of her voice, as she answers my questions, and tells me what she thought of death, when it hung like a flaming sword over her couch."

"When first the maddening conviction forced itself

upon me that I was poisoned, a shrinking sense of terror entered my soul—a terror so black, so overwhelming, that my brain reeled under its force. I had no hope of life. I viewed death as certain, and the last, sad rending of the spirit from the body, the clay-cold corpse, the glazed eye, the fallen jaw, the shroud, the coffin and the open grave, passed in rapid review before my mind, much more quickly indeed than I can tell it. And then came the remembrance of my mother, and my darling brother. They whom I loved so dearly, and who, I believed, I should never see again on earth. Oh! thought I, that I could once more see her loving eyes bent upon me, hear again the music of her voice, and feel the holy kiss with which she so often blessed me. But no, said I, this cannot be. Death is staring me in the face. I must meet it. In an incredibly short space of time every event of my life passed before me. I remembered things which had long lain silent in the cells of memory. Sins arose and stood around me, and claimed me as their parent. Oh how hideous and black seemed to me the history of my heart. How ungrateful I had been to God, for all His goodness. How often had He called me, with tones of love, and how often had I neglected Him. How had His blessed spirit striven with me, coming again and again and getting answer every time, 'not yet, not yet, a more convenient season.' What a base return for the loving kindness that had watched over me and protected me from

dangers, seen and unseen, from my childhood up. Weighed down with a sense of my own shame, in the presence of the infinite, I could only call out, in tones of deep contrition, 'God have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner.' But now the fiery tortures commenced again, and my vitals seemed turned to living coals. My throat was dry and choked, my tongue was parched and swollen, and an unquenchable thirst took possession of me. My brain reeled, and I felt that reason was giving way. I knew that very soon I should be mad, and in the brief interval that reason was spared me, I turned my thoughts to the calm, peaceful home of my childhood. I imagined my mother sitting at her sewing, and little Benny, with his book, beside her. I painted them as they watched for the coming of a letter from me. I saw their looks of affection and interest change to the blackness of despair, as they read the horrid fate—death by poison. I saw my mother, in her wretchedness, tear the silvery locks from her noble brow, and fling aloft her arms in the wildness of phrenzy. I fancied I could hear the thrilling tones of her voice, as she screamed my name, and invoked the curses of heaven upon the head of my murderer. I saw my little brother, as he stood there, pallid and death-like, the big tears rolling down his cheeks, his tiny hands clasped in infant misery, as he turned his eyes, with hopeless appeal, upon my mother, and asked, 'shall I never see sister any more? Did you say that Marcia was dead, my

own, pretty, sister Marcia? Oh, she promised to come back to me! Won't she come, dear mother?'

"I dwelt upon this scene till reason tottered on her throne. I shrieked forth the anguish of my soul, and was a maniac, tortured and wrestling in the mad fury of delirium. All was chaos. How long I remained in this state I know not, but I awoke, at last, to misery and wo. I heard them softly whisper around my bed, that my life hung on a slender thread; that the spirit was hovering, as it were, between the two worlds. I was anxious to die, for I was completely prostrated, and I felt it to be an effort to breathe; and a benumbing torpor seized hold of the faculties of my mind. All my energies were crushed, and I still feel that I am under the influence of the poisonous effects of the deadly drug.

"My only anxiety is to get away, to leave behind me all remembrance of the past, and to pillow my poor head, once more upon my mother's breast. It needs the magic influence of her smiles, the melody of her voice, the tenderness of her watchful care, to charm me back to life and happiness again."

"And all these you shall have, my sweet child. I myself will go with you, and watch over you, as tenderly as your own father would have done. You must keep up your spirits, and take excellent care of yourself, and I think by riding out every day to recruit your strength, you will in a month, perhaps, be equal for the journey."

"How kind you are, Mr. Woodville. How can I ever thank you for all you have done for me?"

"By not thinking me the cross old man so many deem me. Come, cheer up, and clothe your pale face with some of those sweet smiles that used to bring sunshine to my heart. Here comes Flora, with a rich bunch of flowers for you."

"Oh, how beautiful! Are they for me though, indeed, Flora?"

"Yes, uncle Octave has just been to get them for you."

"How very kind. I hope he did not give himself any trouble for me."

"It was no trouble, I know, for anything uncle Octave does for you is a pleasure."

"So, little flatterer, you want to spoil me too, do you?"

"Nay, sweet child, Flora only desires to do you justice."

"Poor Octave. I am sorry that I cannot make him happy as he wishes. But, alas, happiness I fear is a phantom that smiles but to allure us. We must look beyond this vale of tears, where the wanderer's weary way is strewn with thorns, if we wish to taste a cup of pure felicity."

CHAPTER VI.

"Thought, like a bird of drooping wing,
Sits hushed upon thy brow;
While from thine eyes deep-shaded spring,
A thousand feelings flow."

A month has passed slowly by, and here I still remain, and I do not think I am either stronger or better than I was at the commencement of it. Why is it that this fearful prostration continues so long? Shall I never regain the elasticity, the buoyancy of youth? The doctor tells me I am better, and that I will soon be well, and dear, kind Mr. Woodville has made every preparation for our journey, and talks confidently of our visit to New York; yet, notwithstanding all this, my heart is sad, and hope no longer gilds my wandering way. I have a dread of death: an indefinite sense of terror, which I can scarcely explain to myself? And why should I fear death? Is it not a good friend? Is it not the door-keeper of heaven? Are there not joys in heaven, never tasted in the cup of life we drink this side the grave? Is there not perfect happiness in the presence of God? Is there not rest from all the sorrows that are our portion here? Yes, oh, yes—but yet my heart clings to the dear ones I must leave behind. I had hoped

to be the prop of my mother's age; the joy and comfort of her life. I had promised myself the dear privilege of warding off from her loved form the blasts of adversity, the sorrows of humanity: to encircle her with an atmosphere of luxury, and shield her from trouble and care. To educate my little brother, and rear him up to a life of usefulness and good; and now to die, in the first dawning of womanhood, ere yet my sun of life has fairly risen; ere yet my fragile bark has been well launched; ere I have learned half the sweet emotions the human heart is capable of feeling. Forbid it, heaven. Spare me a little longer from the damp charnel house.

It was from a reverie like this, I was aroused by the entrance of Mrs. Woodville. She who, at first, I had read as the coldest-hearted of her sex, now never entered my room, that she did not seem like a ray of sunshine to my lonely heart.

"Come, Marcia, cheer up. There is a stranger coming, and he will be here to tea. We have engaged his services to teach the children, and John has been prevailed upon to join the school, and I trust to study in real earnest."

"What a burthen I have become to you. I am no longer able to be of any use to you."

"Do not say so, dear child. You have grown so closely into our hearts, that we should miss you as much, if you left us, as though you were our own flesh and blood. But, to return to the new teacher. He

is from the State of New York, and from all we can glean, he is a man of finished education, polished manners, and possessed of a mind of the highest order. I trust that the addition to our family circle will please you, and give you something to relieve the monotony of your life, here in the Georgia woods."

"Dear Mrs. Woodville, how considerate you always are for me. How can I thank you for all your kind, motherly care of me. I bowed low over her hand and kissed it."

It was a beautiful evening, late in March. Not the cold, blustering, stormy March of the North, but the balmy, genial, fragrant spring of the South. We sat in the parlor, awaiting the coming of the stranger who was to take my place. The children indulged in many wonders as to whether the new teacher would be cross; if he approved of whipping, if he gave long lessons, if they would dare to speak in his presence, &c. &c.

"Don't you remember," said Flora, "how we waited when Marcia was coming, and wondered what she would be like?"

"Yes, I do," said Albert. "I said she would be a tall, cross, long-nosed specimen of humanity, with red hair."

"It was I that said she would have red hair," interposed Gregory.

"Well, did you find yourselves mistaken?" asked Mrs. Woodville.

"Yes, indeed," said all the children in a breath.

"And what did Laurestina think of me?" I asked.

"I was afraid you would whip me, when you came, for mother said I was such a lazy child, and I felt certain that I would never learn my lessons in time."

At this moment we heard the clattering of horses' hoofs, and looking through the window we perceived the expected party coming up the avenue at a brisk trot.

"It is the new teacher," cried out all the children, and in another moment they had entered the room.

The children's cousin, whom I shall call cousin John, approached me, and greeted me warmly. Although he was so wild and refractory to others, he was always gentle and docile to me. Octave came next, and inquired, with the tender solicitude of a brother, after my health. He then introduced the stranger to me, whom he had previously presented to his mother and uncle.

Harry Percy was about thirty years of age. He was tall, finely formed, and splendidly developed. His broad chest, muscular arm, and erect figure, left you nothing to wish for to make up a model of manly beauty. His face was not handsome, and a casual observer would have supposed him a man of very ordinary mental powers. His hair, which was black and glossy, he wore carelessly pulled down over a broad and ample forehead. His eyes were large, full and brilliant in expression, but he veiled them beneath their lashes, and only at times could be seen glimpses of the fire that burned within. His nose was rather

homely, and as it was neither Grecian nor Roman, I presume it must have belonged to the same family as my own, commonly known by the familiar appellation of "pug." His chin was prominent enough to bespeak the man of energy and decision. And now I come to describe that feature which, in my opinion, tells more of character than any other of the human face. His mouth was large, and was filled with two rows of teeth as even and beautiful as pearls. The bright red lips, when in repose, spoke the quiet happiness of a mind at ease, but when he spoke and became interested in conversation, the smile that hovered round his lips lit up his face with superhuman beauty, and made his countenance beam with intelligence and animation. I never saw so heavenly an expression on the face of a human creature. And when first it shone on me, it found its way at once to my heart. I read in that bright look, in that soft melodious voice, the mild fluctuating beauty of his countenance, which expressed piety, love, truth, respect, sternness, energy and candor, by turns—the soul that could not be swerved from honor's track—the man of truth and sincerity of mind and purpose. I studied him with an interest no human being had ever awakened in my heart before, and I found it quite easy to observe him closely, as I was not obliged to talk much, on account of my being an invalid. I soon became convinced that I saw before me a man whose purity of heart, strict, unbiased integrity, and sinless conscience, made him

worthy of the esteem and admiration of all good men, and I felt satisfied that the dear children would be well taught, and kindly treated by him. At supper, he was placed beside me, and the gentle attentions he paid me pleased me more perhaps than the occasion warranted. He saw that I was an invalid, and he at once assumed a frankness towards me like that of an affectionate brother. When we went into the parlor, after tea, he fixed the pillows in my easy chair, and placed the stool under my feet, and did it all with such an air of quiet self-possession that you might have supposed he had known me for years.

The conversation turned upon education, and was briskly supported by Octave, Mr. Woodville and cousin John, and now and then, when appealed to, Harry Percy would join them, and there was in all he said so much quiet dignity and good sound sense that I was more than ever prepossessed in his favor.

Speaking of whipping, Octave said—

"I judge of this matter entirely from my own experience, and I am quite sure I never learned a lesson better for having been whipped into it. On the contrary, a dogged resolution possessed me to see how firmly I could stand out against my master. Often, while the lash was coming down on my back, and making me wince with pain, I have kept repeating to myself 'I'll never surrender—I'll die first.' If children wont learn without whipping, I am afraid they never will with it."

"I think it is shameful to whip such large boys," said cousin John, feelingly.

"Such as yourself, I presume," said Mrs. Woodville, with a demure smile.

"When I was a boy," said Mr. Woodville, ——

"Which was some few days ago," mumbled Albert.

"When I was a boy, the good old-time people used to think very highly of the precepts of the bible, and when I saw my father coming to me, with the cat-o'-nine tails, I always knew the first words would be, 'spare the rod and spoil the child.' I make no doubt I should have been a better man if he had whipped me three times where he did once."

"I should like to try it now," said Albert to Flora.

"A'nt you ashamed of yourself," was the reply.

"What is your opinion, Mr. Percy?" asked Mr. Woodville. "Do you think refractory boys, like Albert here, for instance, could be managed without corporeal punishment?"

"I do not know enough, as yet, of his peculiar organization, and therefore could not answer in his case; but, as a general thing, I think it far better to gain one's end by gentleness. That boy must have a cowardly spirit who compels his teacher to whip him into the performance of his duties."

"Do you think female teachers are better for boys?" asked Mrs. Woodville.

"Most unquestionably, madam. There is so much gentleness in their manners and character, that, in-

sensibly to themselves, the boys feel and bow to it; and thus begins the first homage they pay to woman."

"I know that is the truth," interrupted cousin John, "for when I went to school to Miss Sally Gibbs, and she was thirty, and I was ten, I was madly in love with her, and made her promise to marry me as soon as I grew up."

"Oh, John, what nonsense," said Mrs. Woodville.

"I fully agree with Mr. Percy," said Octave. "The mild influence of woman softens down all the roughness of boyish nature. I know when I was a boy, I would have hailed the advent of a woman into the school room with a delight bordering on madness. Constant intercourse with the sex refines and elevates the sentiments, and man acquires, in the society of woman, an ease and refinement of manner impossible to gain elsewhere; and more; he learns, for her sake, still more devotedly to fulfill his duties to his fellow man."

"I believe what you say is correct," said Mr. Woodville. "It bears the impress of truth." Mr. Percy said,

"I believe the public generally are waking up to this fact. Many of our largest schools for boys, are now entirely under the care of lady teachers, and, so far, the system works admirably. I hope it may succeed, for it will be the means of giving employment to many excellent women who are forced to labor for their bread."

"I trust it may, indeed, from the bottom of my heart," said Mrs. Woodville, "and I have, indeed, often thought it a great pity that there were not more fields of labor open to women who are thrown upon their own resources. Do not think that I belong to that class who advocate woman's rights, and who think her place is in the pulpit, in the halls of legislation, in the offices of government, or at the polls. All these things are certainly out of her sphere, for many reasons, and one, particularly. Although the intellect of women is frequently of a high order, still they lack that strength of mind, that comprehensiveness and power of concentration, that rank man highest in the intellectual scale. It is true, there are occasionally women of that masculine power of mind, which makes her prominent in all she undertakes; but here, in my opinion, she destroys the loveliness of her character, and the feminine softness which makes woman so dear to your sex is lost, and then, who would envy her her high position? But there are ways and means by which the condition of the sex could be vastly improved, without destroying one atom of the gentleness and modesty of her nature."

"Your argument is unexceptionable, madam, and I am not without hope, that, in this age of improvement, something may be found, some philosopher's stone, capable of transmuting all her bright qualities into gold."

"And what do you think of all this, Miss Walton?" asked Octave, in a low tone.

"I have no doubt your mother takes a correct view of this subject, as she does of every other she touches upon."

"Well, I beg leave to differ with all of you," said cousin John. "Women have now by far too many privileges. They break our hearts as carelessly as they would an old time-worn pie-plate. They think nothing of making us lay awake all night, fretting and sobbing over their heartlessness and inconstancy. For my part I don't see what they were sent on earth for, without it was to be the plague of all honest, soberly disposed men's lives."

"What treason," I exclaimed. "I revolt against it in the name of my slandered sex."

"Oh, you know I excuse you, as a matter of course! I should not think of classing you with the generality of your sex."

"No, I wont let you flatter me thus. I wont let you coax me into compliance with your treasonable doctrines. If I did, doubtless, I should be the first one to suffer by it, and I wish you to remember, John, I shall warn all the young ladies about you, particularly pretty little Kate Kennett."

"Now don't, pray don't. Indeed I will retract all I have said, if you will forgive me this once."

"Don't promise rashly, Marcia. Try him first," said Mr. Woodville, laughing.

"Well, rebel, I will try you, and beware how you transgress again. I shall not easily pardon a second sin, I assure you."

"Marcia, how well you look to-night," said little Flora. "I have not seen you in such spirits since your sickness. I do think you will soon be well enough to race with me in the avenue."

"I hope so, indeed, Flora, but I must confess I don't feel much like it now."

"Flora is right," said Mrs. Woodville, affectionately passing her hand over the thick masses of my hair. "I knew our little girl only wanted change of company. She could not help but weary of such plain country people as we are."

I looked up, at this allusion to the pleasure I had experienced in the society of the new teacher, and met the earnest gaze of his eyes fastened upon me. I know not what had such an effect upon me, but I know I blushed, and quickly turned my head. I said to Mrs. Woodville,—

"Nay, nay, dear friend, you wrong me there, I could be nothing short of ungrateful, if it were possible for me to weary of you. 'Tis true I long for the dear ones who are bound to me by the ties of blood, but do not think, however far from you I may go, I shall ever forget you. I feel that with me 'tis

"Death alone remembers not."

"What do you think the doctor told me about you, to-day? He said he believed you would be able to start about the middle or last of April, though he thinks May would be the pleasantest month for you," said Mr. Woodville.

"Oh, how glad I shall be when the happy moment arrives," said I, clasping my hands together in an ecstasy of delight, as I sat dreaming of my mother's embrace, and heard her words of joyous welcome.

"Miss Walton has been ill?" asked Harry Percy, in a tone of interest.

"Oh, very ill," said Mr. Woodville. "Indeed, at one time we feared we should lose her, but we have now every hope that her youth, and a good constitution, will triumph over disease."

"What was the cause of her illness?" he asked pointedly.

Mr. Woodville paused a moment before replying. Then he said—

"A very high fever at first, followed by prostration so great, that I feared nothing short of a miracle would rally her from it."

Harry Percy looked at me kindly, pityingly, and all at once it occurred to me that I had seen him before, but when or where I could not remember. Of one thing I was convinced, however, and that was, that the family wished every one to remain in ignorance of the cause of my illness, and I mentally resolved to keep the secret faithfully, since, by betraying it, I

would expose to the view of the curious, a dark spot, they were naturally anxious to hide.

The evening passed pleasantly away, and when we separated, we were mutually pleased with each other. In fact the coming of the stranger in our midst, formed a valuable acquisition to the family party, and my mind dwelt upon him, more, perhaps, than was justifiable. Still I could not divest myself of the idea that I had somewhere seen him before, and like the vague remembrances of a dream, I connected him with my distant home. I noticed, when Octave first presented him to me, a strange look of surprise and interest in his face, which he at the same time vainly strove to dissemble. At length, wearied with my cogitations, I fell asleep and dreamed; and that which I saw in my dream was so singular that I will repeat it.

Methought I was in a large ship, in the middle of the ocean, and I was the only passenger. The captain and his officers were preparing to meet a terrific storm that was threatening us, and the sailors were rushing wildly to and fro, to execute the orders of their superiors. I felt no fear, for all around me were mighty pillars of marble, which seemed to me to form a bulwark, of strong defence, that even old ocean could not harm. I trusted in them implicitly, and sat looking at them with much of the same faith with which the repentant sinner views the Cross of Christ. But, lo, in the midst of my fancied security, while the wind howled, and the waves rose mountain high, there came

from the bosom of the deep a great white being. His face shone like the sun. His stature was mighty. With a great sword he cut down the pillars which had been my defence, and one after another cast them into the sea. Oh, how desolate, how desponding I was at that moment, when what I had trusted in was thus rudely torn away. But suddenly the white being raised to heaven his hand, and said, in tones of pity and love, "Trust thou in God." I looked again. He was gone, and amid the howling of the storm the ship dashed on, and the giant waves washed over the decks, wetting me to the skin. A chill, as of death, passed over me, and I awoke, trembling with an indefinable feeling of terror. I tried to reason with myself, and remember it was only a dream, and at last I fell asleep, and the self-same vision presented itself before me, even more vividly than before. I can remember it now, as I write, as clearly as though it were only a moment ago I dreamed it, and I am superstitious enough to believe it was sent to me as a warning from God.

In the morning, when I awoke, I resolved to tell Mr. Woodville my vision, and get him to interpret it to me. I accordingly took my breakfast, and having allowed Susan, my dressing maid, to attire me, I went out to seek him. He was sitting in the porch, reading, and as I took my seat beside him, he welcomed me with kind smiles, and inquiries after my health, and taking my hand in his, he pressed it tenderly.

"Marcia," said he, with an anxious look, "how is this? I find you feverish this morning."

"I had such a singular dream last night, and I came to you to interpret it," I replied.

"What, my child, have you so much faith in my wisdom?"

"I have, indeed."

"Since when have I acquired such majesty in your eyes?"

"I know not any particular period. Indeed, it seems to me I always felt it."

"Let me hear your dream," he said.

I repeated it, word for word, as I have written it. The old man sat quietly musing for a long time after I had finished. At last he said—

"That it was true he could divine the dream. The ocean upon which the ship was launched, was the ocean of life. The captain and sailors were the virtues and passions, who alternately sought to guide me. The pillars of marble to which I trusted, were many and dear friends, to whom my affections clung, and upon whom I leaned for support, love and protection. The great white being was the angel of God. By his action he proved to me how vain it was to trust in aught that this earth can give, and how impossible it was to gain heaven, till all earthly affections are uprooted. He pointed upward, and told me of the Friend who was able and willing to defend me. The wild dashing of the ship was what was to be

expected. The storm that surrounded me, had been the lot of many another way-worn and weary pilgrim. I must expect to meet them, and obey the divine voice that spoke in my dream. I must "trust in God."

I felt that there was the impress of truth in all that Mr. Woodville said, and I returned to my room to ponder in silence upon this call that God had given me in a dream. It may be readily supposed that the impression made by it was deep and lasting, and within the chambers of my heart the blessed spirit of God wrestled with me and exhorted me to repentance.

That evening I yielded again to Mrs. Woodville's solicitations, and joined the family circle in the parlor. The conversation was bright, cheerful and animated, and was prolonged to a late hour. There were moments when I fancied that Harry Percy could be terribly sarcastic in his opposition to what he believed erroneous ideas, but his raillery was of that polished kind that called forth no emotion of anger. He thought slavery a sin, and condemned it as a blot on the national escutcheon. Octave, on the contrary, warmly upheld the system, declaring it to have originated in a wise ordination of Providence. "The stranger within thy gates," he believed to be the slaves of the olden time; thus proving that the Bible countenanced slavery. He also called attention to the comfortable condition of the slaves, compared to that of the free black population, or even the lower classes of

whites, at the North, and quoted in favor of his argument the favorite by-word of the slaves themselves, "as wretched as a free nigger."

Mr. Percy said—

"It is true, as you say; there is great misery at the North, and much of it, it is impossible to avoid. The constant influx of foreign paupers, thrown destitute upon our shores, makes misery and want, that, labor as we may, we cannot entirely alleviate. But the great evil in slavery I conceive to be in the unlimited power the master has over the slave. If he be a tyrant, he can exercise the most brutal cruelty to the poor creatures who are his property, and they have no redress. He can make life a burthen to them, too intolerable to be borne, and at the same time they may have done nothing to deserve such cruelty at his hands."

"I acknowledge all you say to be quite true, Mr. Percy; but let me ask you one question. Have you never met with tyranny at the North? Have there not been cases there where children of both sexes have been bound out in families, who have daily been tortured and goaded with the lash, and nearly starved, to satisfy a caprice on the part of master or mistress? Have not poor children, scarcely covered with rags to protect them from the chilling blasts of winter, been sent into the streets to scrub the door-steps, while their hands nearly froze as they performed their labor? I do not say this is the general feature of the North. Far from it. I only assert that these cases are facts

which I have gleaned from actual observation, and I solemnly assert that the cases where a slaveholder abuses his slaves are equally rare. Does not your own good sense teach you that it is our interest to be kind and careful of them? They are our property; if we do not make them comfortable and provide for their wants, they depreciate in value. No man, with the common dictates of humanity, would abuse his horse, neither would he abuse his still more valuable property, his slave."

"I do not deny that there is truth in what you say, but still it does not prove that the system is right. Man has no power, human or divine, to hold his fellow man in bondage. If you admit that blacks have souls, you must, to a certain extent, place them on a level with yourself. What says our Constitution? 'That all men are born free and equal.' And is this freedom? Is this equality—to traffic in human flesh, to buy and sell the being that God has endowed with an immortal soul, a spark struck from his own Divine nature? Nay, if this be freedom, it were better far to live the fawning subject of royalty—the mere creature of the crowned-puppet that they call a *King*.

"What, then, would you have us do to remedy the evil? Suppose we grant freedom to the slaves, and permit them to go forth as they list, what would become of them? Do you not know they would die out before the faces of the whites? Does not experience,

in the fate of the hapless Indians, prove to you how completely all such races must be exterminated?"

"You quite mistake me, if you suppose me to be one of those hot-headed abolitionists, who want the slaves to be turned loose upon society, without any preparation—far from it. In my opinion, the only just mode of proceeding would be to fix a time, and let it be fifty years distant, if you choose, and declare that upon that day your slaves shall all be free. Commence now to educate the race, both fathers and children. Strive to raise them from the darkness of ignorance, and exalt their hopes and feelings."

"That is all very well to talk about, Mr. Percy, but if you knew as much as I do about the blacks, you would be convinced of the fallacy of your theory. Educate the black—exalt his ideas! Why, he has no intellect to take an education, and no mental power to apply it when taken; and as to his ideas, he has none to exalt. An educated darky would be a phenomenon of nature. I never saw one, North or South. Speak candidly, now—did you?"

"I have, indeed, seen many."

"And are you sure they were blacks? Were they not rather a mixture of the two races?"

"I can't say; but I rather think they were part white."

"Ah! now, we have it. These men that you speak of, that had sense and education, derived it most undoubtedly from a white ancestor. Believe me, you

little know the character of the blacks. They are totally unfitted by nature to provide for themselves, and nothing do they so cordially hate as any kind of mental application. 'Tis true, they are affectionate, and become very much attached to us, and so do we to them; but they have many bad traits of character that call forth all our patience, and, indeed, seem to merit extreme severity.

"There is, perhaps, justice in all you say, but still with all my northern prejudices fresh around me, you can't expect to convince me. It is quite likely if I had been born and brought up in the midst of slavery, I should have been, like yourself, blind to its evils, and none can know better than myself how to sympathize with the weakness which has been engendered by early associations. But, let us change the subject, since it is apparent we are both fixed in our own way of thinking. I am sure the rest of the party must think us very prosy individuals, and selfish in the bargain."

"I, for one, was very much interested," said Mrs. Woodville.

"I should be better pleased to have Marcia play some for us, if it would not fatigue her too much," said Mr. Woodville.

The rest of the party eagerly joined in the request. I said—

"I play and sing so poorly that I fear it will be a cause of annoyance to Mr. Percy, who has just come from the great American centre of musical talent,

New York. He is doubtless a severe critic, and fear of his ridicule steals away my voice.

"Indeed, Miss Walton, you do me injustice to suppose that I could ridicule you. I assure you, the fashionable opera style of singing is very much out of my taste. I certainly prefer the sweet old-time music. There is far more melody in it, and it is inexpressibly dear to me, on account of the fond memories of home it awakens in my breast. Pray sing without fear of me."

And play and sing I did, with an energy and power of execution I had not felt for months. I ran through all the favorite airs from the operas, polkas, waltzes, marches, preludes, symphonies, &c., and wound up with singing all the old-fashioned songs I could remember. I forgot a critic's ear was listening to my performance, but I sang from the heart, and I felt through its every fibre the truth of the words, "Home, sweet home, there is no place like home."

At last I stopped, and every one present had some word of praise, saving and excepting only Harry Percy. I felt piqued, and looked up to examine his countenance, and see the perfect indifference I fancied must be there, but I was struck with the hopeless dejection of his attitude. He sat resting his head on his hand, and gazing on the floor with such sad listlessness of manner as touched my heart with pity. Ah! I exclaimed to myself, this man has some secret cause for grief. He is unhappy. Oh! would that mine were

the magic power to chase all sorrow from his brow. Dangerous interest! Ah! beware, fair daughter of earth, when thy heart feels pity such as this. Thou mayest, unknown to thyself, be forging chains for thine own freedom.

I went to my room, sat down and wrote the following lines:

Why sittest thou so lonely,
When all around are gay?
Is it thy heart, thine only,
That feels not music's sway?
Was there no charm to lull thee,
When Marcia sang of home?
Hast thou lost that love so holy,
As leaves thy heart alone?

Or hast thou cause for sorrow?
Dost thou at hour of night,
Look sadly for the morrow,
That brings to thee no light?
Hast thou buried all that loved thee,
Deep in the silent grave?
Or have the false deceived thee,
And betrayed the trust you gave?

Oh! tell me why so joyless,
Droops thy majestic brow?
Is thy sun of life so rayless?
Thy heart all darkness now?
Oh! tell me what thy sadness?
Relieve thy burdened breast;
I'll inspire thee with gladness,
And soothe thee into rest.

I know not why I ask thee,
Thy secret wo to tell;
But gladly do I task thee
Thy sorrow to dispel.
In childhood's early hour,
I grieved for other's pain,
And I feel for thee the power
To weep and grieve again.

* * * * * * * *

One fine, lovely Sabbath morning, we arose, and taking an early breakfast, started for church, which was twelve miles distant. It was the first time I had accompanied the family since my illness. The air was mild, and came laden through the windows of the carriage with the breath of spring and the perfume of wild flowers. Our road lay through a fertile and highly cultivated part of the country, and as we were drawn rapidly along by a pair of swift horses, I felt that the shadows which had so long been darkening my path were being dispelled by the brightness of all around me. Octave and Harry Percy were in a buggy, drawn by the superb grays, and rode in front of us, occasionally stopping beside us to exchange compliments and smiles. Mr. Woodville and cousin John rode in a buggy behind us, and thus our little party wound their way to the house of God.

Arrived at the church, we alighted and entered, noiselessly. A strange feeling of solemnity came over me as I took my seat in Mrs. Woodville's pew,

but it was not to be wondered at, when the horrors I had passed through were recalled. And then, again, during the coming week, I expected to leave Georgia, never to return to it, perhaps,—never again to sit in the old church, and join in its time-hallowed worship. It was the spirit of God that strove with me then, warning me to forsake the world and all its vanities, and trust in God. I bowed my heart in repentance, and when we came to the confession, and repeated the words—"We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep; we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts," oh, then it was that the conviction seized me how deeply guilty I had been. I remembered the peculiar manner in which God had called me to himself, and I found I had been giving my heart, and its thoughts and feelings, to the creature, and had banished from His shrine the creator of my life. In a word, upon close self-examination, I read a secret before unknown to me. Of its nature I shall speak more hereafter.

The Reverend Mr. W—— preached on that morning a sermon from the text,—"Give thy heart to God." He went on, in the most lucid manner, to explain what this giving of the heart meant. He said there were too many Christians who gave their devotion and prayers to God, who relieved the poor, and were always foremost in works of love; who were, in fact, or seemed to be, the pillars of the church, and yet who were in reality on the brink of a precipice,

with only one step between them and eternal death. "These persons," said he, "who lull themselves in fancied security, and who believe heaven sure, are those who give their hearts to God with a reservation. There is for them one darling sin, one cherished fault, one secret passion that they cannot sacrifice, and they believe that their devotion in all other matters will ensure their pardon for this; but, alas, wo to them; their condition is far worse than that of the hardened sinner, for he may be awakened to his danger. They cling to this secret sin. It has become a part of their nature. They cannot exist without it. Many of them, indeed, are ignorant that it is a sin. It has become so natural and so necessary, that they feel as if death would ensue should they try to uproot it. And thus they die and go to judgment, all unprepared for the stern, All-seeing eyes which have long since penetrated the deceitful heart, and awarded it its doom. Let me entreat you then to search minutely the hidden impulses of your lives, and pray humbly and fervently to God to preserve you from secret faults."

I pondered deeply on this sermon, all the way home, and as I sat at my casement that evening, looking forth upon the starry night, sad, solemn thoughts came over me. The spirit in my heart said—"give thy heart to God," and I asked myself if I could do this unreservedly? If I could renounce all the pleasures and affections of life, in obedience to that Divine voice? If I could bow in submission to that Will,

that ordered all things wisely and well? If, in short, I had a feeling, a passion, an earth-born interest, a secret-dweller in my breast, which would make me shrink from yielding myself up a willing sacrifice on the altar of God, to be chastened as He pleased? And in that quiet hour, there came a light as it were from heaven, and shone upon me; and I saw that my spirit was earth-bound; that my heart had, alas, its secret fault.

CHAPTER VII.

"The sun is bright—its golden rays
Gild mountain top and flower;
O'er rock, and wave, and vale it plays,
From morn till evening hour.
But oh! no beauty in its beams
My weary heart can see,
While rocks, and vales, and glancing streams,
Keep me away from thee.

The waves to others wear a light
More glorious than the sky;
To me earth's hues are only bright,
Reflected from thine eye.
The world may deem me dull and sad—
I care not how that be;
I never can or will be glad,
Mother, away from thee."

Was this reality? Was I, indeed, seated in the cars with Mr. Woodville beside me, and little Flora, and good, faithful Susan in front? Yes, it was all

true; I was on my way, and in a little while I should reach my native city. I should see again the dear ones I loved so fondly. But, alas, how different, how changed was all since I left them. I had gone to the South to seek for health. I was returning from it a weak, frágile creature, that could not even do without a nurse, for such, disguise the fact as you would, Susan certainly was, though Mr. Woodville pertinaciously persisted in calling her my Abigail, for I don't know what reason, without it was to make me believe I was not sick.

We reached Charleston and took passage in the steamship Southerner, for New York, having first telegraphed to my mother, when she might expect me home. On the morning of the third day we reached our destined port in safety. While sitting waiting in the ladies' cabin, for Mr. Woodville to go after a carriage, a lady, dressed in deep mourning, approached me, holding by the hand a little boy. She threw back her veil.

"My mother, my brother," I exclaimed, as I threw myself into her extended arms, and then fondly clasped my brother to my heart. My mother said—

"Alas, Marcia, my child, my darling, how pale you are looking."

"Oh, I am much better now, mother. I have been sick, but now I feel indeed like another being. This is Flora Grayson, mother, one of my little pupils." My mother kissed her. "Now, Benny," said I,

"here is a little girl who loves you dearly, just because she has heard me talk about you."

"Then you did not forget me, Marcia?" he asked, at the same time kissing little Flora.

"How can you ask me such a question, you blessed little darling? Why, I should sooner forget to breathe."

"Ah, but you have been with such nice little boys and girls at the South. I expect they were a great deal better than I," said he, archly.

"And so you were jealous of them?"

"I don't know. I thought they might be very good, and you would perhaps love them much more."

"Are you satisfied now, little rogue, that I don't love any body more?" I asked, pressing him fondly to my heart.

"Yes, I know now I was foolish to think you could forget me. I know I am very dear to you, *because you say so*, sweet sister."

How gratifying to my sad spirit was this tribute of love and confidence. Mothers and sisters, I entreat you to act to your children and brothers in such a manner that they may learn the beauties of truth from your example. How holy is the sight of a young child, who nobly and fearlessly speaks the truth on all occasions, and who scorns all subterfuge—who would far rather confess the evil done, and be punished for it, than rest with the stain of falsehood on its infant lips.

Mr. Woodville returned, and warmly greeted my mother and Benny, and then we left the boat, and having had our baggage strapped on the carriage, we drove rapidly to our home, which is in the up-town part of New York. Mother insisted that Mr. Woodville and Flora should stay with us, and after a long argument they consented.

"Ah," said he, "Mrs. Walton, if you only knew what a siege I have had with that girl. She is as obstinate and crooked as, I don't know what. She has done little else but fret to come home ever since she left you, and that was ungrateful, to say the least of it."

"Now, don't say ungrateful, Mr. Woodville. I am sure I was not that."

"You are a saucy minx, and I suppose we shall have plenty of airs and graces, now you have got home to your mother, but I shall remove you from her in a very little while, miss, for it is my intention to start for Saratoga in a month or so, and I am resolved to take you with me. How do you like that?"

"I don't want to go, indeed, I don't. I don't want to leave my mother."

"Don't want to go, aye? I see through it, as plain as day. You hate me; you can't bear the sight of me. That is it."

"You know I don't hate you, Mr. Woodville. You know that I think you one of the dearest friends I have got on earth."

"Poh, poh, all nonsense. I don't believe a word of it. Nothing but flattery, deceitful minx."

Here a very significant look passed between him and my mother. It was not intended for my eyes, but I understood it.

That evening, news having gone forth of my arrival, a number of friends came to see me. Among them was my school-teacher and Mr. Johnson, an old friend of my father. Miss Staunton, I may safely say, was delighted to see me. Mr. Johnson, a tall, slender man, of fifty, with as many curious tricks as a monkey, greeted me with becoming pleasure. Mr. Johnson was known and dreaded by all his friends, and when he began to tell an anecdote, every body left the room, or hastened to turn the conversation. He asked me many questions about the South, but, generally speaking, he answered them himself. At length, raising his voice, he commenced to tell a story for the edification of the assembled company.

"Now that you are all here, and Marcia has come back, I will tell you something interesting that occurred some twelve years ago, when I was in New Orleans. I remember that I went one day to see ——."

"Yes, we have heard all about it a dozen times," said Miss Staunton. Marcia, do let us hear if you found teaching to be an enviable task."

"There are many laborious duties in the life of a teacher, yet I am pleased with it in numerous respects,

for I think in imparting instruction to others, our own minds become exalted, refined and polished."

"Yet it is a vast responsibility."

"Oh, yes, but I think in guiding souls to heaven, our hearts become purified and strengthened for the task, and we are insensibly led along the path we are pointing out to others. I acknowledge there are many difficulties in the life of a teacher, and many trials of patience. Many discouragements that weigh upon the heart, and make her task heavy, and the burden grievous to be borne. She needs, perhaps, more than any other person, an abiding trust in that God who has promised never to forsake the helpless, to raise up those who fall, and to make the day ever sufficient for the strength."

"I am proud of you, my child," said Miss Staunton. "This is, indeed, sweet fruit to gather from the soil I have planted and nourished with such tender care. Dear Marcia, you have repaid me to-night for the labor of years. Who will say that a teacher has no blessings to counterbalance all the evil of her lot?"

"It must be certainly pleasant," said Mr. Johnson, "to find that Marcia has proved so dutiful, but for my part, I must say, I like spirit. I remember when I was a boy, I was considered the worst child in the whole school, and I was universally acknowledged by teachers and scholars to be the ring-leader. Well, one day when the master was out ——."

"Marcia, do play for us," said Miss Staunton, who

had an unconquerable aversion to friend Johnson's long stories, and invariably made it a point to nip them in the bud.

I began to play. Mr. Johnson looked grave for about five minutes. Then he commenced to hum an accompaniment to the piece I was playing, in such horrid bad time that I was forced to stop, leaving to him the honor of executing the piece.

"Why do you stop?" he asked, in the most unconcerned manner. "Oh, I see how it is. You are fatigued from the long journey you have taken. Miss Staunton should have known better than to ask you to play, for you are not only tired, but you keep miserable time, and your voice is anything but musical. I had a sister that sang as badly as you, and yet she would not be convinced, but thought she had a voice like a nightingale. One night, my mother gave a large party, and all the fashion of New York was there. Let me see, it was in the year 18—, no that could not have been the year either. I guess it must have been 18—. I was younger then than I am now, and ——."

Again Miss Staunton made a desperate effort, and said,

"Do you remain long in New York, Mr. Woodville?"

Poor friend Johnson looked daggers at first, then he gave it up in despair, and in a few moments he took a seat on the sofa, where Flora and Benny were

carrying on a nice little conversation of their own, and I was soon satisfied, by the expression of their countenances, that he was exerting himself to the utmost to make them as miserable as possible.

I will not dwell longer on the events of this period, for two months slipped away almost unperceived, and the time arrived for us to start on our Northern tour. I frequently asked Miss Staunton to tell me of whom she had spoken in the postscript of her letter, but for some reason inexplicable to me, she maintained a profound silence upon the subject. It is useless for me to enter into detail, and explain by what arguments Mr. Woodville prevailed upon my mother to let him take me to Saratoga. It is enough to say, that at the end of two months, we were comfortably fixed at the United States hotel, in a handsome suite of rooms, and daily taking the most delightful drives through the beautiful farming country that surrounds the village. I believe the water did me some good, and I might have felt happy, but that I was every day annoyed by some ill-timed exclamation of pity, from some one of the many loungers about the hotel. I do think it excessively ill-bred, to comment, in the presence of an invalid, upon their delicate appearance, and frail hopes of life.

Mr. Woodville was ever at my side to cheer my hours of weakness, and in pointing out to me the snares and pitfalls of life, to lead me to a serene contemplation of that blessed land God has prepared for

His children. I always listened to him with attention, and one day I said in answer—

"What you tell me is no doubt correct and true. I feel it, and yet I cannot bring myself to look upon it calmly. I feel a terror of death, that I cannot overcome. The world looks bright and beautiful to me, and I, who have never tasted of its pleasures and joys, save on such a limited scale, long to sip of that cup of pleasure I have heard so glowingly described, even though I should feel certain that in the end its contents would turn to gall and wormwood. I feel within me that irresistible desire and craving for life, which is in fact our second nature."

"It may be perhaps the cravings of nature, but I would think it more just to say it was the promptings of the Evil One, who seeks to win you from that straight narrow way, which leads its followers to heaven. But, believe me, dear child, the first sweetness of the cup is soon forgotten, amid the anguish caused by the bitter dregs. Do not think that I deny the possibility of human happiness. I am not so unjust. Had the fair love of my early years been true, I should have been indeed blessed in the possession of her. If you, Marcia, had loved Octave as dearly, as fondly as he loved you, you might have drank sweet draughts of the pure fountain of wedded love, and marriage is certainly the highest and happiest state of existence permitted to mortals on this earth."

"I can well believe it, and you must not chide me

when I confess to you, that I have sometimes indulged in dreams of what my feelings would have been had I been blessed with a love it was in my power to return, and united for life to a being whose thoughts, impulses and wishes coincided with my own. When sometimes I see the happiness of others,—when I see the gentle wife leaning on her husband's arm, and looking up to him with all the confiding fondness of devoted affection; when I see the young mother, in the full ripeness of her girlish beauty, holding her infant to her breast, and regarding it with eyes beautiful and bright, with all the unutterable tenderness of maternal love; oh, chide me not that I weep, and say I am an alien to all these holy emotions. I can never be a wife or mother. I must go down to an early grave, and the heart that might have loved fondly and well, must cease its pulsations, and lie cold and still within me; and all this is because I have been the victim of another's crime."

"And do you, my dear child, allow this to fret you? I had hoped to find you more resigned. But do not think that I ever forget it, or cease to mourn that you are forced to suffer thus. All the tender pity and countless enjoyments of a world should be yours, if they were in my power to bestow. Do not, dear girl, give way to this unhappiness. Seek rather to raise yourself above the weakness of human nature. It does seem cruel that you should have to suffer for

others, but God has doubtless permitted it for a wise and good purpose. He has called you to himself, and that which He offers in return for all you give up here, will repay you amply. Let us seek, my dear girl, to be worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven; to sit down in the blessed kingdom of Him who loves us, and has called us both in an especial manner. He loveth whom He chasteneth, and though the way may be dark and stormy, and each moment we are tossed upon life's troubled sea, yet if we trust Him, He will never forsake us, but will lead us with a father's hand to a home of peace and security."

"Dear Mr. Woodville, I know I am blessed with such a teacher and friend. Pray do not get weary of me, and think me incorrigible if I do not act in all things exactly as you wish. Would that I could profit better by all your kind advice. Indeed I will try to throw off this spirit of rebellion which rises within me, and urges me to arraign God for all I have suffered. He has done it for the best, and I will strive to say—'Thy will be done.'"

"Believe me, my child, if you will humbly pray for strength, you will receive it. But you must pray with faith. I remember when I first began to pray, I had no just idea of what faith was. I prayed for contentment and peace of mind merely out of curiosity, and I promised myself I should see whether God would answer my prayer; but one day I came across a

hymn in the prayer book, that opened my eyes upon this subject. Doubtless you remember the lines,—

'Faith is the Christian's evidence,
Of things unseen by mortal eye;
It passes all the bounds of sense,
And penetrates the inmost sky'

This faith, said I, is what I want. The prayer of faith is answered. I must not question that which I do not understand, but give myself up, in all humility, to be dealt with as seemeth Him good. Here, then, was the great secret, and when this barrier was broken down, need I tell you how all the pride and coldness of my nature faded away; how I knelt and fervently entreated that the wounds of my spirit might be healed? I did not ask so much for forgetfulness of the past, for although she was false to me, was it not better far to remember and forgive, than seek to bury the sting and let it rankle in my heart?

"At length, I gained some peace. I forgave her; and, perhaps, my greatest fault now is, that I have attributed too much merit to the pardon, which was wrung from me, as it were, by years of bitter anguish. But, God knows the misery of years, a blighted manhood, a desolate, sorrowful old age, are something for a poor mortal to forgive; for, as you well know, to love those who love us is human and natural, but to forgive and love those who crush us with their falsehoods, is not merely noble and just—it is divine."

"Do not say your old age is desolate. 'Tis true it

is not much that I can do to cheer it, but, believe me, that little shall be done cheerfully, and will spring from the purest and most disinterested affection."

"I know it, my dear child, and the consciousness of your love is, indeed, a solace to my old age. I have often lately thought of making a proposition to you, and I may not, perhaps, find a more suitable opportunity than the present. Give me the right to love and protect you. Permit me to adopt you as my daughter. I will promise to obtain your mother's consent. What say you, Marcia? Will you be my child?"

"Are you in earnest, Mr. Woodville? Would you, indeed, take the poor child of sorrow to your heart, and bless her with a father's love—that love so long a stranger to my path—so earnestly longed for by my lonely heart?"

"I will, indeed, my dear child, and I promise myself an endless source of happiness in my newly acquired daughter. From this moment consider me your father—will you not?—and you shall see how kind and indulgent I will be, at all times, to my sweet child."

I rose from my seat, and was clasped to the noble heart of the man whom I could call by the endearing name of father, and I felt that the wanderer's way had at last reached the banks of a cool, refreshing river, whose lucid bosom mirrored forth a tranquil happiness, before undreamed of, for my future lot.

I know not how it was, but from this period my health seemed visibly to improve. Flora, laughingly,

assured me my cheeks were as rosy as her own. I think that was an exaggeration. I was able to take more exercise, and was not so sensibly affected by fatigue.

My mother wrote, in answer to Mr. Woodville, her thanks to him for all his kindness to me, and assured him of her gratitude. And then came a long letter from Mrs. Woodville, telling me how happy she was to hear that Mr. Woodville had acted such a part to me, and assuring me of her unchangeable love and affection. She begged me to recruit my health, and return to them in the fall, telling me that from her I should receive the warm welcome of a mother, and that every member of the family joined her in sincere wishes for my entire recovery and speedy return to their midst.

The season at Saratoga was very gay, and many persons sought the acquaintance of the adopted daughter of the rich Georgian, who, I suppose, would have shrunk from the contamination of associating with a mere governess. But there were others, again, who nightly frequented our parlors, and who were among the choicest spirits of the day. They met together and contributed greatly to my amusement by the highly intellectual and instructive tone of their conversation. I was particularly delighted in the society of one lady, Mrs. Allen, who hovered around me, and seemed to have formed an almost sisterly attachment for me. She was one of those persons who at first sight appear quite homely, but who upon acquaint-

ance so grow upon you, and gain your affections by the inexpressible sweetness of their manners and conversation, that you end by thinking them beautiful, and by prefering them to all others.

I had always imagined Mrs. Allen to be singularly blessed in all the relations of life, and believed her to be perfectly happy. One day, when I was indulging in a few childish tears at the sickness that still clung to me, Mrs. Allen entered.

"What, Marcia, in tears?" said she, kindly taking my hand.

My heart was too full just then to reply.

"You must not give up to these feelings, my dear little girl," she said. "You must try to be happy. You can, if you will."

"You can very easily say that," I answered; "you that have never known what trouble or sorrow are, in all your life.

"Do you really think so?" she asked, in a tone whose saddened cadence touched me. She put her hand in her pocket, and drew forth a tiny book. She handed it to me that I might read the title. It was called "A Crook in the Lot." While I was looking over it, she said, in a slightly faltering voice, "Know, my dear child, that every heart has its own bitterness. Sorrow is our portion here, and we should not repine that it is so, but look around us, when we grow discontented, at the pictures of wo and misery presented to us on every hand. If we will but contrast our situa-

tions with those of others less highly favored, we shall learn contentment, and find that we have cause for gratitude rather than repining. Above all, we have never any right to make others unhappy by our discontent and complainings. We have a sacred duty to perform to our fellow-creatures. How can we discharge it, if every feeling of justice to others is swallowed up in the selfishness of our own sorrows. Alleviate the woes of others, and your own will be deprived of half their bitterness. Trust me, it is in entire abnegation of self that the soul is prepared for another and a better world. Self must be mortified, humbled and debased, and the heart must dilate to receive the tale of wo, and the hand be quick to relieve the suffering stranger, before we may be pronounced candidates for the blessings of immortality."

"And do you think, Mrs. Allen, that good works will take us to Heaven?"

"Far from it, and yet, I conceive it necessary that faith and repentance shall be accompanied by good works. There are doubtless instances where sinners, after a life of crime, have been pardoned and received at the hour of death, but, trust me, it is a sad moment to look to, for repentance. Too many who have trusted to this last, forlorn hope, have awakened in another world to mourn their irrevocable doom, and the only words their dark despair could give utterance to were, too late, too late. And, again, we owe it to God that we devote to him our youth, our days

of brightness and joy, as well as the night time of sorrow and care. He never forsakes us in adversity—should we forsake him in our hour of prosperity? In the common friendships of life, how is this condemned? How every body despises the fair-weather friends who leave us when sorrow overtakes us; and yet how often do we thus neglect God, who loves us with a Father's love, who guards us from evil and who watches over us through the long hours of the day and night; pardons and forgives us our many short comings, and loves and pities to the last. Yes, even when he condemns the soul to the punishment it so richly deserves, His love still extends to the cowering being before Him, and with all due reverence do I say, He cannot pronounce the words of doom, without pity for the poor, lost, out-cast before him. Oh, yes, I do firmly believe, dispute it who may, that the Mighty God, Creator of all worlds, Author of Life, the Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent director of all human events, loves and pities the poor weak worm He has made; who, in battling with the storms of life, has not had sufficient power to guide his frail bark clear of the shoals and quick sands that have surrounded and embarrassed him. Does not such a God deserve the worship of our hearts? Should we not forget the trivial sorrows of our lot, and serve Him with all the love, the devotion and obedience, which are so richly His due? Do not fear God. Love Him, and serve Him because you love

Him, and not from fear of being doomed to an eternity of punishment. It is a mistaken notion to work upon the fears of people, to induce them to become religious. Such conversions are seldom lasting. If we are convinced how much God has loved us, surely it will not be difficult to love Him in return."

"I should think not, indeed, and we are most ungrateful and sinful if we do not. Indeed, dear Mrs. Allen, I will try to benefit by your conversation today. It has turned my eyes inward upon myself. I see that I have been very selfish, and I have no doubt it will be a hard-fought battle to overcome all the weakness that incumbers my spirit; but, I will try to win the victory, and if God will but bless the effort, I am confident of success."

"And, believe me, my dear child, God will bless the effort. He will raise you up, and give you strength and courage. Trust Him for His mercy and grace. He has called you, Marcia, now, in the springtime of life, in an especial manner. Doubtless the short-sighted wisdom of your friends has thought prudent to conceal from you, my dear girl, that which is plain to every eye; but in all the tenderness of a sister's love, I would warn you of your fate. Marcia, the fiat has gone forth. No earthly hand can save you. I read in the sweet, childlike outlines of the face before me, the seal which death alone impresses. Alas, Marcia, you must die."

"Yes, poor Marcia shall die, but souls that we love
Have an endless existence and progress above."

CHAPTER VIII.

"In lonely strength I stand,
E'en though Niagara thunders at my feet,
And storms of spray upon my bosom beat,
I can their force withstand."

My dear father, for so I shall now call Mr. Woodville, finding that I daily grew worse, resolved to take me to Niagara, believing, in the fondness of his heart, that all I needed was change. He seemed to banish from his mind the thought that the effects of the poison were slowly wearing out my existence, and sapping the foundation of life.

Arrived at Niagara, we took rooms at the Clifton House, on the Canada side, which place we reached by crossing the river on the suspension bridge, a short distance below the Falls. Never shall I forget my emotion, when, for the first time, I gazed on the stupendous phenomena. I was lost, in speechless wonder, at the mighty mass of waters that rolls, in one endless torrent, over the ledge of rocks. One can scarcely conceive it possible, that this great body of water has been constantly supplied for ages. It would seem as though even the ocean would be drained to meet its demands. And then, again, the mighty roar of the cataract, beside which all other sounds are faint, the same hoarse, thundering voice that waked

the echoes of the Indian forest, ere yet a Christopher Columbus had discovered a new world. The same mighty tones as when unheard by all but God, in the early ages of the world, proclaimed to earth and sky the wonderous power of its maker, God. My head reeled as I looked down into the abyss at my feet, and I felt that singular temptation to jump off, which has so often assailed older and wiser heads. Flora clung to me for support, as if she feared being carried over, against her will.

Here let me say a few words relative to the feeling to which Marcia alludes. I believe it is most properly termed a morbid impulse, or perhaps it might be called, with equal propriety, a monomania. I know there are many who laugh at the existence of such things, but I can testify to actual personal experience in the matter.

At one time I remember being at Cape Island, and paying a visit, with a large party of young people, to the Cape May Light-house. We all ascended, laughing gayly and merrily, to the top. It seemed indeed an interminable distance, but at length we reached it, and were amply repaid for our trouble by the beauty of the prospect around us. To the left of us lay Cape Island, with its mass of hotels and beautifully picturesque cottages; before us lay the ocean, bright with the reflection of the setting sun, and at the foot of the Light-house the surf dashed in upon the finest beach in the world. Directly across the bay could

be seen the Cape Henlopen Light-house, and, in the offing, were several ships of giant size, unfurling their canvas, and standing out to sea. A number of small craft were gliding up the bay, and the scene, including the bright blue sky above us, was one certainly diversified enough to form a glorious picture.

It was now the hour of fashionable promenade, and the beach was crowded with the gay and lovely belles of New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, and they certainly presented a more beautiful appearance than they ever do in Broadway, Chesnut or Baltimore streets. Beside them the wild ocean was dashing its spray over their thinly slippered feet. They were attired in light flowing, summer drapery, and wore on their heads those coquetish little caps made of zephyr, some scarlet, some blue, some pink, some canary color, and altogether the scene was a most witching one to the eye, and beautiful from its imagery, if from nothing else.

I stood long gazing at the picture, and suddenly conceived the idea that I should like to see how it looked straight down at the base of the Light-house. I approached and looked down, but an intense desire possessed me to jump. I combated it with all the power I was capable of, but finding I could not controll the impulse, I screamed to the rest of the party to save me, and made a spring. In a moment I should have been hurled to the bottom, but a strong hand seized me. It was the keeper of the Light-

house, who had been watching me, and who assured me it was no unusual thing for visitors to be affected in that way, particularly ladies.

"How do you account for that?" asked a pert young lady.

I quickly answered her, "Because our heads are so much softer than men's."

Upon another occasion, I remember I had been very ill, and one of the medicines that had been used in effecting my recovery was laudanum. The bottle stood on a little table at my bed side. I had an irresistible desire to raise it to my lips, and drink all the contents. This was not a wish to commit suicide. I doubted that it would have that effect, and wished to prove to my mind whether it would kill me or not.

At length, one night, it seemed to me as if an evil spirit had taken possession of me. Eleven, twelve, one, two o'clock struck, and I could not sleep. I sat up in the bed, took the bottle, deliberately uncorked it and raised it to my lips. I know not how to describe the conflict that now took place within me. It was certainly a battle between two opposing principles, perhaps Will and Passion, perhaps Reason and Madness. I made one last desperate effort, and, rising from the bed, went to the window and dashed the bottle into the street. I felt that I had no power to resist the temptation if I kept it before me, and I thus placed it out of my power to do wrong. But, whither am I straying? I leave you to explain to your own satis-

faction the singular feelings I have experienced, and return to the artless presence of Marcia Walton, the lone Wanderer of our story.

We crossed the Niagara river in the little steamer "Maid of the Mist," ascended the Biddle staircase, and the tower of the same name; visited Goat island, and then returned to the Canada side, and passed two hundred and seventy feet behind the great falling sheet of water, treading on slippery rocks, and constantly annoyed by the vast number of slimy water snakes, that ran over our feet and often obstructed our path.

Here we stood, with the spray dashing over us, the roar of waters in our ears, and, if we attempted to look up, completely blinded by the fall of the mighty cataract.

As we came forth, drenched with water, we presented, in our garb of coarse oil cloth, quite a fanciful appearance. But, there have been already so many descriptions of this far-famed phenomenen, that I shall not pretend to add my feeble attempts to the list, more especially as I only refer to it, in order to point out the way-marks in my life, and show you the lights and shadows which have surrounded me.

I felt that I could never weary of this spot, which had, for me, a charm in its awful sublimity, that country scenery, however beautiful in its character, could not possess. There was a music in the mighty roar of the cataract that accorded well with the impulses

of my nature. There was, within me, an echo to the wild dashing of the water, caused by the passions which bound me to earth, and which warred strongly for the posession of my heart. If I knelt down to pray, it seemed impossible to banish thoughts of the world that constantly intruded themselves between me and my devotions. My faith was weak, and removed from the kindly teachings, and the sharp pruning-knife arguments of Mrs. Allen, I was in danger of falling lower than ever, for my dear father made an idol of me, and would not believe that I had a fault. Indeed he loved me so tenderly, that he would have suffered any thing rather than give me pain. But I had not yet been chastened enough, and God, who loved me better than any earthly friends, was pleased to bring me lower yet.

I loved to sit at my window for hours, and as I gazed forth upon the cloudless night, and watched the bright and ever brilliant stars, to listen to the hoarse voice of the mighty waters. Hour after hour often passed in this way, till Susan would beg me to retire, and tell me I would get my death, if I did not take more care of myself.

Susan was a very good girl, but then, like other mortals, she had her weaknesses, and it so happened that there sprang up between her and the head waiter of the hotel, quite an ardent affection. One evening there was to be a grand display of fireworks, and Susan, very modestly, asked my consent to go out

with John, to the frolic. Nothing afforded me so much pleasure as making others happy, and I told her to go, and enjoy herself as much as possible.

I went to the snowy couch in the corner, and saw that Flora was sleeping, sweetly. I took my seat at the window, and was soon lost in reverie. Were I to write all the brilliant phantasmagoria that passed through my mind, at these seasons of quiet converse with the stars, I should be looked upon, at the least, as a lunatic. But I will positively assert that I was at these times in possession of a second sort of existence and life, entirely different in its feelings and ideas from my every day reality. I had power to concentrate the faculties of my soul, and assume a sort of inward life, to which the outward body was insensible. You will perceive my meaning to be, that I thus lost, to a certain extent, the consciousness of what was passing around me.

I read in the stars, strange histories. I heard in the roaring waters, unearthly music. Sometimes I fancied I heard the wild shriekings of despair, the wail of wo and sorrow, as from damned spirits, who thus sent forth the voice of their anguish, and rent the troubled air.

But, again, the wild discord ceased, and the songs of angels floated around me, filling my soul with thrilling emotions of happiness. My heart expanded with pleasure, and I seemed to feel the presence of beings from another world. Laugh as you may, ye skeptics,

I felt this presence, doubtless of the kind guardian angels, whom God permitted to watch over me. Does not the text, taken from God's own book, prove that angels were once permitted to visit earth and keep watch over those he loved? "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee." It is a beautiful, a hallowed belief, and I would not, if I could, destroy my faith in it.

Regardless of the flight of time, and still gazing at those worlds of light, which I seemed to see for the first time, in all their beauty, Susan entered and warned me that it was midnight. She begged me to retire; expressing, as her firm conviction, that I would die of cold, and hustled me off to bed without further ceremony. Of course I was perfectly passive in her hands, and did not even think of resisting her authority.

The next morning, very much to my own surprise, and none at all to that of poor Susan, I was very ill, with violent inflammation on the lungs. For several days, however, my dear father did not seem to feel any alarm, but at last marking my difficult respiration, heightened fever, and entire loss of appetite, he called in an eminent physician from New York, who was boarding in the house. After bleeding me freely, and ordering me some nauseating medicine, he left me. The same evening he came again, and ordered me blistered. Still I grew worse. The next morning I was leeched, and then the violence of the disease abated, and I was pronounced out of danger. But I had suffered intensely, and complete prostration follow-

ed, and for long weeks I lay hovering, as it were, between life and death. It is a singular fact, that frail and delicate persons frequently outlive diseases which would soon have carried off the hearty and robust. Notwithstanding my delicate health, I at last recovered, and as the summer was past, and Niagara at the best, a cold place, my father determined to remove me to Cincinnati, where I might have the benefit of warmer air, and sunnier skies.

And now behold us fixed in that magnificent hotel, the Burnet House, surrounded with comfort and luxury, elegant large apartments at our service, and introduced into the society of the loveliest women I have ever met. I never loved and revered my sex, so entirely and devotedly, as I did after becoming acquainted with these bright and shining examples of it. There was one in particular, who, by the sweet charm of her manner, the holiness and depth of sentiment which characterized her every word, and the kindly feelings she entertained for every human creature, made her seem to me like an angel who had assumed human form. Dear Mrs. R****, never, while memory lasts, never, while this sad heart pulsates with life, shall thy image become dim, or lose the high place where I have enshrined it.

It was no sooner known in the house that an invalid was there, than one and all the ladies called upon me, and surrounded me with their attentions. Ah, how grateful to the heart of the stranger is the sym-

pathy of woman. They came to me with kindly words and gentle voices, and seemed, around my sick couch, like guardian angels sent to minister to my sufferings. I would rather lose all honor the world can give than forfeit the esteem, the love and the favor of my own sex. Nothing can fill the void made by her frown. Often, in the dark hours of my fate, when bowed down by the weight of the sorrows that encompassed me, women have cheered me with their smiles and ready sympathy; they have shielded me with their love, and by their powerful influence I have seen all obstacles melt away from my path. No man, however chivalrous and devoted he may be to woman, can rival me in my admiration and high appreciation of those lovely beings who are indeed the sweet flowers strewn along the pathway of the soul-sick Wanderer.

I passed some time at Cincinnati, and at the close of several weeks, my health had visibly improved, although I had long ceased to hope for a permanent cure. The solemn words of Mrs. Allen could not be forgotten, and all the bright visions fancy sometimes presented, were sure to be banished in my sober moments. Mr. Woodville and Flora never left me alone, and it seemed, indeed, impossible to weary their watchful love. I often expressed a wish to return to my mother, but the physician who attended me, warned my father against taking me to New York, and when I reverted to the subject my father

seemed so pained by it, that I resolved never to speak of it again.

We often drove out and enjoyed the beautiful scenery that environs Cincinnati. It is absolutely embosomed in hills to the north, east and west, while on the south the Ohio, "*la belle riviere*," as the French call it, rolls at its base, dividing it from Kentucky, and the beautiful Covington hills. To drive to the top of these hills one gains a view of a truly interesting and beautiful prospect. This place, which a few years ago was a mere village, built on a hill side, is now a great city, extending itself, like a mighty giant, in every direction. The citizens are great patrons of the fine arts, and they have several fine galleries of paintings, from which may be selected many productions of real genius.

But, the most beautiful work of art I met with, was a pair of adoring Cherubims, which were in the Bishop's Palace, but which were intended for the superb building now in process of erection, called the Cathedral. Nothing I have ever met exceeded the beauty and truthfulness of these fine specimens of statuary. They were cut in Italy from the purest marble, and their divine and life-like expression made me stand in silent awe, and gaze at the handiwork of man.

Ah, thought I, what a soul, what a divine conception, what a mighty power must that being possess, who can impart to the ice-cold marble all the reality

of life but the breath—which can thus portray, in stony lineaments, the emotions that agitate the soul.

The figures are kneeling, and with uplifted eyes they are gazing upon the glory and majesty of God. Their beautiful hands are clasped upon their breasts, and the drapery falls around them so naturally, that you fear a breath of air may displace its folds. To gain a correct idea of all their beauty, one must take a side view of the exquisitely modeled head, the lofty brow, the fine Grecian nose, the small, beautiful mouth, well rounded chin, and full, swelling throat, seeming to long to pour forth, in a burst of rapture and song, the devotion and adoration of angels. I staid over an hour gazing at these beautiful productions, and had not my father hurried me, I could have remained all day. Indeed, I never yet saw a well executed collection of statuary that I could weary of. I have gone, again and again, and always left with the intention of returning at some fitting opportunity. The polished and courteous Bishop conducted us into his library, where the walls are ornamented with many fine paintings and engravings. Over the mantle hangs a small figure of Christ, cut in ivory. The workmanship is exquisite, and was, I believe, executed in Rome.

Let us not linger longer amid these scenes, but hasten away, with giant strides, to that great city of the far west, St. Louis, the garden spot in my memory of the past, a city destined in a few years, to be second

only to New York, the great connecting link between the two oceans, and doing now an amount of business almost incredible to those who live at a distance.

St. Louis! what charm, what magic makes my soul thrill with unutterable emotions, as I write the dear word that awakens in my heart a thousand pleasant memories. Linked with gratitude for the past, and bright hope for the future, I set thy name within my heart, and when I forget to love and pray for thee, when I forget to ask God's blessings on thy noble sons and lovely daughters, may God punish me for my ingratitude by withholding His blessing from me.

Dear St. Louis, what Wanderer's path was ever lonely in thy midst? What widow or orphan ever left thee unrelieved by thy noble bounty, and kindly wishes? God knows that every inch of ground on which thou art built is as dear to my fond heart, as my own dear, native New York.

The eastern people have little idea of the civilization, refinement and commerce of the west, and I must confess, that when I arrived at St. Louis and found a great city, with its ninety thousand inhabitants, with its stately rows of stores and warehouses, its numerous churches and hotels, and its long, thickly built-up dwelling streets, I was filled with astonishment. Education is encouraged liberally. Churches are handsomely supported, and every charitable enterprise is entered into with the kindliest sympathy by the inhabitants. The daily papers are large, ably con-

ducted, and teem with interest, and they are all well supported by an enlightened public. The society is excellent, and there is an absence of that hauteur which is the great bane of some of our older cities. There is a courtesy and also a gentleness of manner about the people, that go right to the heart; and I do not believe any one ever spoke ill of the city who told the truth.

We remained in St. Louis some weeks, which I regard as the happiest of my life; but, for the present, I must vail the history of this time, and proceed to New Orleans. As the weather was now getting cold, my father was anxious to keep me in a warm climate.

It was December when we arrived at New Orleans, but the warm, balmy air, the fragrant flowers, and the bright summer dresses of the ladies, made me fancy I had slept the winter away, and awoke in the beautiful spring time of the year. New Orleans is the Paris of America. It is difficult to conceive a more gorgeous picture, than a drawing-room presents, filled with the lovely belles of Orleans. They have the most exquisite taste in dressing, and the costliness and elegance of their toilets are quite equal to New York magnificence. Their beauty, too, is of that dazzling kind that bewilders the beholder. To visit the soirees given every week at the St. Charles and Veranda Hotels, one might form some conception of the brilliant assemblages of fashion in Paris. The first time

I went to one of these re-unions, I felt convinced that there was nothing in America like them. It seemed, indeed, like a fairy scene, and I imagined every moment I should awake and find it all a dream.

It was a great pleasure to my father to take me to these gay parties, and here I became acquainted with numbers of the wealthiest men and loveliest women of Orleans. I was treated with great politeness and courtesy, and found every where a warmth of feeling, which seems natural to the South and West. Another place of fashionable resort is the French Opera, and we very often went there, for I was passionately fond of music, and hoped to lose, in its holy influence over my heart, remembrance of my sorrows.

At such times my father would sit and watch me, seemingly delighted to read in my face the expression of enjoyment which I know was there. Little Flora always went with me every where, and I have no doubt was improved greatly in her music, with such excellent examples to imitate.

But that which was the greatest amusement and pleasure of my life, strange as it may seem to you, was my visits to the cities of the dead. I took a melancholy pleasure in walking through the grave yards about the city, and spent many hours in them, I trust not unprofitably. I loved to wander along the silent paths and read the epitaphs, and more than all to mark the enduring love of the living for the dead, evidences of which might be seen at the humblest

grave. The French are particularly celebrated for this holiness and depth of affection, which survives the tomb.

The people of New Orleans are forced, on account of the marshy nature of the soil, to bury their dead above the ground. Vaults are built sometimes of brick, sometimes of stone, and oft times of the purest marble, and here the bodies are laid in rows, one above another. Standing in front of these graves are rich and elegant bouquets, formed of the most superb and costly flowers, and placed here by hands that never weary of culling them in remembrance of the lost one. All the long year through, you will find these garlands and bouquets. What can be more sweet and touching than this simple utterance of undying love? Death is thus disrobed of half its terrors, for the bitterest drops in the cup are the thoughts of being forgotten.

I have met somewhere with an idea which I will quote. I do not remember the precise words, but the sentiment has a direct bearing on the subject in question.

"You cannot justly say that that person is dead who still lives in the hearts of his survivors. Every day he is before them. His smiles, his words, his looks of love are garnered up in the treasure-house of memory, and at night, sweet visions of the happy past float round the pillows of the bereaved, and they awake, feeling that they have seen the loved form—

now an angel in the sky, which has been kindly permitted to hover near them and watch them as they slept.

Is this death? Is this that endless sleep; that annihilation which the infidel fancies preferable to any other state of existence? Ah, no, believe it not. What we call death is in reality but the beginning of life. Where would be the use of this life, with its toils and struggles, its long probation, its thorny and difficult track, if that track did not lead to a beautiful country, a land flowing with milk and honey, a paradise, in short, where our thirst for happiness shall be fully satisfied, and where God, Himself, shall wipe all tears from our eyes?"

But there are grave-yards here, and long rows of graves where no sweet flowers bear evidence of love; where no loved form kneels, and where no foot, save that of the careless, ever strays. These are the Strangers' graves, and you may read, in the simple inscriptions, a whole world of meaning. Here, a youth of nineteen, native of Boston, far from his mother, his home and his friends. Yellow fever, '46. There, a young man of twenty-three, Portland, Maine. Yellow fever, '46, and so on you may count them by the dozen, till the heart turns away, sick at the thought of what their last, sad hours, might reveal. The terrible pestilence, stalking through the streets of the doomed city at noon-day, the wail of anguish, sorrow and death; the last, sad prayer for mercy, never

sought till now; the rumbling of the wheels of those vehicles that bear away to the charnel house the loathsome corpse; all this came up before me, and I turned shuddering away. And, would you believe it, while this horrible fever is ravaging the city, a bright, glorious sun shines high in heaven, and beautifully clear skies hang over it, with an air that seems to be the very breath of purity?

But, let us turn from these melancholy scenes, to where life, and light, and beauty have undisputed sway. I was sitting one evening at the French opera, witnessing the performance of Robert le Diable. Deeply interested in the opera, I had not glanced around the house. Our box door was suddenly opened, and I looked up, at an exclamation of surprise from my father. In truth I was as much startled as he, for Octave Woodville stood before me.

CHAPTER IX.

"Oh, is it sin to love the very air
That once had rested, Marcia, on thy brow?
To gaze in fondness on thy vacant chair,
And on thy books and flowers deserted now?
Or turn with fond remembrance to thy face,
Whose sweetest looks the heart alone can trace?

Is it a sin to live again each hour
Passed in thy presence? to recall thy tones,
Thy playful words, thy serious thoughts, whose power
Thrills every nerve my quickened spirit owns?"

We shall be forced to go back a little in our story, in order to explain what may have appeared unintelligible.

Mary Jones was the only daughter of a wealthy southern planter, whose residence was about ten miles from the Woodvilles. She was twenty years old, rather pretty, extremely coquetish, and believed husband to be only another name for tyrant. Octave Woodville had long known her. He fancied he loved her, or perhaps he did so, truly. He proposed to her father, and was referred to his daughter.

Now nothing was more certain, than that Mary really liked Octave, but she felt a delicacy about letting him know, all at once, how completely she had surrendered her heart to him. Mary was a great tease, and she thought if she was very tractable now,

her greatest delight in life would be taken from her. In short, she resolved to torment Octave as much as possible, and she began by imposing upon him a long probation, telling him she would try and see if she could not like him a little. Really she had never thought of it before. He had quite taken her by surprise, but she would think about it. Octave bore this very well, and proved to the little tyrant what she knew very well all the time, that he loved her tenderly. But Mary was not content to let well enough alone, and she thought she would try how far she might go in provoking Octave's jealousy. Several days in succession he met her out riding with a young gentleman in the neighborhood, and her manner to him was so constrained and formal, and to his rival so friendly and kind, that, in a fit of rage, he told her he renounced all pretensions to her hand, and left her free to marry whom she would. Mary pouted her saucy little lips, and told him he was a very small loss to her; laughed and chatted gayly, till he took his departure, and then she ran up to her room, and gave vent to more bitter tears than had ever wet her rosy cheeks before. She tried to convince herself that she did not care, but conscience would not acquit her of having trifled with the feelings of an honorable lover, and poor Mary was unhappy, for the first time in her life.

Octave, smarting under the disappointment, but too proud to speak of it, had hidden it in his own

bosom, and concealed it from his mother, and it was shortly after that, that Marcia Walton came to live with them. Octave had spent most of his time in his country home, and had never had opportunity to see much of the fair beauties of the North. Marcia was exquisitely beautiful. Her fine, pure complexion, large, tender eyes, so holy and meek in their expression, and yet capable of lighting up with the hidden fires of intelligence; her small, rosy mouth, fine classical head, and even her pale cheek, had all their charm for Octave, not less lasting and dear on account of their novelty. But there was that about Marcia, which, even had she been homely, would have made her lovely. She was pure-hearted, amiable and sincere. If she spoke you might know you heard the truth, and her eyes seemed to mirror forth the feelings of a soul of spotless purity. She was kind to every living being, and would not even tread upon the humblest insect in her path.

Mary was a bright, rosy-cheeked picture of health and enjoyment, and, indeed, no two persons could have been more different. When together, which they often happened to be, one would be struck by the perfect beauty, and yet entire difference of their features. Doubtless, Octave, having become wearied of the gay, wild-bird-like Mary, turned with satisfaction to the quiet Marcia. Certain it is, he admired her talents and accomplishments, but still more than all else, he was enchanted with the sweet gentleness of her man-

ners. She was always calm and self-possessed. Her voice was soft and low, and its tones thrilled to his inmost heart. In short, Marcia was a perfect specimen of a refined and intelligent lady.

I would ask you, now, if it was strange that Octave withdrew his heart from Mary Jones, and conceived a violent passion for Marcia? and it was violent, just in proportion as Marcia was cold and indifferent. Here the struggle in the young man's heart was severe, for he dreaded lest, by a careless word, he should alarm the delicacy of the fair girl, and place her under restraint towards him. Sometimes he fancied that Marcia was already plighted to some favored lover in New York, and at this thought the bitterness of his feelings was insupportable, and it became evident to all his family that something was weighing on his heart. But, then again, he would converse with her, and gaze with delight at the pure spirit that shone from her eyes, and seemed to confess they had no secret to hide, and he would chide himself for his own weakness, and indulge sweet dreams of the future, with Marcia for his bride.

Such was the state of things when Octave used that ungallant expression, "confound Mary Jones." To tell the truth, he regretted that he had ever fancied he loved any one but the fair beauty he so wildly worshipped. He loved Marcia as man never loves but once. He rested his every hope of happiness upon her acceptance of his hand and heart, and the bright

future he had power to offer her; and we have seen how she refused him, proving in the very act the high-souled integrity that actuated her conduct. There are too many girls who, dazzled by the offer of wealth and position, would have accepted it for interests' sake, but our Marcia was not of that mercenary stamp. She was one of those beings we sometimes meet in our wanderings by the way-side, who seem lent to us for a little while, to teach us what Heaven is like, but who are speedily called away to the bosom of the Father.

The anguish felt by the whole family, when Mary, the slave, had committed her diabolical crime, has been already depicted, and as it would be useless to repeat it here, we pass over it to the time when Marcia departed for the North; thus depriving poor Octave of the only pleasure that had remained to him, the charm of her society. It was in vain that Mrs. Woodville sought to relieve his sorrows by all the watchful tenderness of a mother's love. It was in vain that John, his wild, young nephew, talked and related anecdotes, and played off his numerous pranks. Octave seemed sunk in hopeless despondency, and Harry Percy was the only person who possessed any power over him. Every moment Harry could spare from the duties of his school was spent with Octave, and in a short time they became as affectionate as brothers.

That Marcia had been very ill was a fact well known to Harry, but the cause of that illness had re-

mained a profound secret to him. It often seemed to him, however, that Octave had something on his mind he wanted to confide to him, but was not yet determined how to act in the matter. The cause of this mystery was an enigma to Harry Percy, and he would not for worlds have sought his confidence, or tried to fathom his secret, and yet that secret was one which interested him deeply.

At length, Octave grew seriously ill. He was out riding one afternoon, and a heavy storm came up. He returned home through the drenching rain, and every article of clothing he had on was saturated. The next day he was confined to his bed, unable to move from side to side, on account of the stiffness of his limbs, and a long, tedious attack of inflammatory rheumatism supervened. His mother watched over and nursed him, and Gregory, who dearly loved his uncle, spent long hours at his bed side, and never wearied of playing the part of an affectionate nurse. Harry Percy brought his books, and read aloud or talked, and strove, by every means in his power, to make the time pass pleasantly for the invalid.

Every Saturday, April drove down to town, and returned with letters from Marcia, Mr. Woodville and Flora. Mrs. Woodville, pitying his anxiety, always allowed Octave to read them first, and he would peruse, with the most intense anxiety, every line that Marcia had penned, and every word in his uncle's letters that related to her. His heart bounded with de-

light at the praise Mr. Woodville always bestowed upon her, and, if possible, he loved her more and more, now that he might call her his cousin. He was rejoiced that his uncle had adopted her, and he felt that it would not be likely she would leave her adopted father to go to New York, at present. He thought that she would return to Georgia, live with them again, recover her health, and in the end, perhaps, all his bright dreams might be realized.

Then came another letter, dated at Niagara, and Marcia was ill, very ill; and he was sick—a cripple. He could not fly to her now, and watch her, as he had done before. Oh! the long sleepless nights, the interminable days, there were then in a week. A week that used to pass so swiftly. How maddening was the suspense till April came with the letters. Marcia was better. She was not able to write yet, Mr. Woodville said, but she soon would be, he hoped. Two long weary months elapsed, and then came a letter from Marcia, dated at Cincinnati, written in her usual affectionate style, but breathing a tone so hopeless, so desponding, that the heart of the strong man was shaken, and the tears, long strangers to his eyes, moistened his sun-burnt cheek.

"Here, Harry, read this letter, and do not scorn the weakness that prompts these tears. If you loved her as I do, you, too, would weep; for, alas! it is I who have caused her fate. It is my fault—all my fault. But read the letter. I will tell you about that afterwards."

And Harry Percy did read the letter, but neither by word or look did he express the deep interest he felt in the writer. Octave said:

"You may think me childish, Harry, but you do not know all. Listen to me. These tears are shed for the sad fate of the fairest girl that ever blessed the sight of man. And Marcia is not only lovely because she is fair, but she is as good as she is beautiful. And yet, so young, so lovely, so well calculated to adorn the most brilliant position in life, she is doomed to an untimely grave; and why, do you suppose?"

"I know not. She came out here, I believe, in delicate health, and after she reached here was taken ill with some violent fever."

"Taken ill with a fever! Alas, she was; and a red hot, intense, burning fever it was to be sure. Harry Percy, you will hate me, I know, when I tell you the horrid truth. I poisoned her."

"YOU POISONED HER!" said Harry, starting from his chair with a look of horror, and a face as pallid as death.

"Yes, *I* did. Not to be sure with my own hands, or my own will, but had it not been for me the crime would never have been committed. Lean your head down, Harry, I will whisper the frightful tale to you, lest it wake the echoes around my bed, and fill me again with terror."

* * * * * *

"And thus this lovely, innocent girl is paying the penalty of another's crime?"

"She is; she is; and can you call me by any other name than murderer?"

"Nay, Octave, do not thus accuse yourself. It is terrible, but it is past. You cannot undo it. Try to be patient. Soon, perhaps, you will see her again. No doubt she wishes to be with you."

"Longs to see me? pines for my presence? Ah! no, no, never. You are quite mistaken, Harry; Marcia pitied me, but loved me, never. In fact, she refused me decidedly. She told me she never could love me. She gave me not even an atom of hope."

"Then I have been deceived, for I was led to believe you were betrothed to each other. I supposed some slight difference had arisen between you, and stood in the way of your present happiness."

"Alas, how much you have been mistaken a bursting heart can testify. Such happiness never was intended for me. It was asking too much of fate. Ah! what a delight it would have been to me to nurse her, to minister to her wants, to surround her with all the delicate attentions of devoted love. How dearly I should have prized her smiles; how tenderly wiped away her tears. Oh! I would have guarded her as the miser does his gold; tenderly as a mother does her first born, I would have folded her to my bosom, next to the heart that beats only with its undying love for her. But, why talk of this impossible happiness?

Marcia, weak and feeble, doomed to die; so young, so beautiful, and yet food for the loathsome worm, and *I—I*, the cause! Oh! God be merciful to me. I am suffering the penalty for my own crime. Alas, the punishment seems greater than I can bear, but I see in it Divine retribution. The measure I have meted out to others, has returned to crush me to the very earth."

Do not, dear Octave, give up to these wild, self-upbraidings. They can do you no good. You have, indeed, deep cause for grief, I confess, and yet if you will compare your lot with others, you will find many blessings granted to you which have been withheld from others. Look rather on the bright side of the picture. Try to get well speedily. Go to her, and perchance your presence may be a solace to her, even though you may not be as dear as you would wish."

"I am afraid to go to her. Must she not hate me, when she reflects that it is my fault for which she is forced to suffer such bitter expiation?"

"Ah! believe me, Miss Walton never hated any body in her life. From her early childhood she was remarkable for the sweetness and amiability of her disposition."

"How should you know anything about Miss Walton, when she was a child? Surely, you met here as strangers? What am I to think?"

"'Tis very true, Miss Walton does not know me, but I am acquainted with friends of hers in New York, who never weary of praising her, and they all unite

in pronouncing her first of her sex. Do not fear then, that she has not forgiven you. Doubtless each night, as she kneels before her Maker, she implores the mercy and blessing of Heaven upon your head."

"Do you, indeed, think so? Oh! how happy such a belief would make me. I have never ceased accusing myself from the time of the dreadful occurrence; but if I could feel she had forgiven it, I should be much relieved."

"Try to be patient, and recover from your illness. Then go to her, and hear your pardon from lips that have dropped blessings on all around them. I feel quite certain she will accord it, with all the nobleness that marks her character, and makes her so worthy to be loved."

"I will do so, but what an effort of patience it will be to wait till I recover. Oh! how wearisome it is to lay here, as weak and helpless as a child, while my soul pants to be free, and fly to her presence, which alone is happiness to me."

"There is but one way to overcome impatience, my dear friend, and that is by trusting to a higher power than your own for strength to bear the sorrows of life. The burthen, which now appears insupportable, would be lifted from your shoulders, and contentment would once more fill your breast, if you would but trust in that God who has promised to sustain you in the dark hours of adversity. School your heart to submission to His Will, and restrain those emotions which must

necessarily increase your anguish and suffering, both of mind and body. I have often been astonished to mark how much more patience, faith and endurance, women display in moments of intense anguish than our own sex. This is, I think, very remarkable, when we take into consideration our superior strength of mind and body."

"But, then, you must recollect that the life of man is active and exciting. It ill suits his impetuous temperament to be housed up in indolence and inaction. With woman it is different. She passes her time in quiet and retirement, and the monotony of sickness is rather pleasant to her than otherwise, because she is relieved from the necessity of all exertion."

"Ah, my friend, you do not give woman credit for the noblest of her qualities, when you speak of her thus. I have been considered, by all my friends, a woman-hater; and why, do you suppose? Simply, that I never condescend to flatter and whisper in her ear the soft nothings that feed her vanity, but which I consider beneath the dignity of a man. Yet, I admire the sex. I have studied it well, and there is not a being on the face of the earth who has a higher regard for woman than I have. The veriest beggar that crawls the street, covered with rags, is entitled to my sympathy and kindly wishes, if a woman. It matters not how low she is; I have no right to scorn her. She is the creature of circumstance.

And again; the poor, lost being, who is cast off by her own sex, who is the sport and puppet of ours, who has fallen, alas, so low that she ceases to blush for her own shame, is still worthy of my pity, and of that of every man who has not lost all human sympathy and feeling. God forbid that I should add to her catalogue of wo and misery, one atom of scorn. But pity, the holiest pity, words and looks of encouragement, kind advice—all these she is entitled to, and I should hate myself if I could look back on one act that had brought fresh sorrow and pain to the heart of one already crushed with despair and shame."

"There I must confess we must differ. I cannot conceive that any kindness shown to such beings could be appreciated. It would, in my estimation, be throwing pearls before swine."

"Whether they appreciate your kind intentions or not is another affair; not yours. Perform your own duty. Act from a sense of justice and right, and leave the rest to God, and believe me it is far better to err on the side of mercy, than to be too severe. And, again, I would ask, who made you a judge over your fellow man? Are you perfect and without sin, that you arraign him at your tribunal? Ah, believe me, if God punished us with the severity that we award to our fellows, I fear we should never reach Heaven. It is, indeed, well that our judge is removed from all the weaknesses of humanity."

"Admiring the fair sex, as you do, it is singular that I find you past thirty, and a bachelor. Why is this, or is it a secret?"

"No, the reason is very obvious. My father died soon after I reached the age of manhood. His property was considerable, but not more than enough to support comfortably my mother and three sisters. I relinquished all claim to it, and resolved to carve my own way through the world. I went to New York city, and devoted myself to the study of the law. After close assiduity, for a term of years, I received a diploma, but here an unforseen difficulty presented itself, and I was obliged to postpone, for a period of time, the practice of my profession. A circumstance occurred that filled me with anxiety, and I resolved to spend a year at the South to suit purposes of my own, which shall, perhaps, at some future period, be explained to you. I have never married, and it is not likely that I ever shall do so, for I would not link the fate of the woman I loved with my uncertain fortunes. I could not endure to have the being who looked up to me for support and protection, suffer from my inability to provide for her. It would break my heart. I should have no energy, no spirit to meet the trials of my life, which are surely arduous enough as they are. Now, alas, my path is all too dark for happiness. Then it would be far worse."

"You deserve a better fate, Harry, and I trust fortune will shine upon you yet."

"Rather say Providence, for I will not allow that the fickle goddess has any power over us, save that which God allows. There are too many circumstances occurring every day, in the wise economy of nature, to convince me of an over-ruling Providence, to permit me for one moment to doubt of its existence. I have an humble trust in His goodness. If He has not blessed me, as others around me are blessed, doubtless it is for my good, and I bow in submission to a will holier and nobler than my own. But do not suppose I have gained this triumph over the weakness of my nature in a day, a week, or a month. Ah, no, I have suffered long and deeply, and I know I should never have conquered had I depended upon myself for aid. God himself has seen and blessed the effort, and all the victory is to be ascribed to Him. If I can talk calmly and quietly to you, while a deep and incurable sorrow sits at my heart, believe me it is by the blessing of God."

Harry Percy paused, and covering his face with his hands, remained silent for a long time. He seemed to be overcome by the violence of some secret grief. Octave was surprised at what he had told him, but he was too well bred to press him for an explanation. He, however, profited by his kind and brotherly advice, and after some weeks, he was able to walk about the house. Gradually his strength returned, and a letter arriving with the intelligence that our little party was in New Orleans, he resolved to join it at once.

In a very short time, his arrangements being made, he set out, promising to return as soon as possible, and bring Marcia with him. It is thus we may account for his appearance in the box at the Opera, at the close of the last chapter. Leaving the party to mutual congratulations and inquiries, we will, if you please, visit the boudoir of a couple of pretty girls, after the opera of that evening.

CHAPTER X.

"They came and went like shadows,
The blessed dreams of youth,
And they left behind no impress
Or record of their truth.
Then the future was all sunshine,
In gorgeous robes arrayed;
But ever as I reached it,
Its sunshine turned to shade."

"What a foolish girl you are. It is easy to be seen you have lived in the country all your life," said a fair young lady, at the advanced age of seventeen, who was dressed in canary colored brocade.

"Have the girls in cities no hearts?" asked her companion, in blue, contemptuously.

Well, no; or rather, yes; they have hearts but they manage them and keep them in subjection. Now really this little affair of yours"—

"Don't talk to me and call it a little affair," said

the young fairy in blue, stamping her little foot impatiently.

"Oh, ho! oh, ho! she is getting in a passion, aye. And with me, too, that she always pretended to love. That is a pretty way to treat an old tried friend."

"Forgive me, Kate, pray do. I was vexed, and you know I had reason for it."

"I don't think you had any reason at all, now, you simple little dunce, to fret and feeze, and worry about a naughty man, that wont even look at you, and you sitting there dressed so charmingly in blue."

"Do you think, Kate, that that particular color ought to have attracted his attention? For my part he seemed to have no eyes for any one in the theatre but that pale girl with his uncle."

"Who is she?"

"Why, don't you remember her? That was Marcia Walton."

"Marcia Walton? Is it possible? Why, how she has altered. I never should have known her in the world. Where are they staying?"

"I don't know, but you can easily find out by asking your father."

"So I will, the first thing in the morning, and we must call on her, Mary, at once. False delicacy ought not to stand in the way in such a case. She is sick, and a stranger here, and she is therefore entitled to our warmest sympathies. I shall ask mother to go with us."

"I don't like—to—go. I—I—might meet ——."

"Nonsense, you might meet? Well, what if you did? Treat him with such contempt that he will soon see how you hate him."

"But I don't hate him, though."

"More dunce for your pains then. At all events we will go. So now let us retire, that we may be bright and fresh in the morning. I do love dear, old Mr. Woodville so. Good night."

"And I do love dear, young Mr. Woodville so," sighed Mary Jones, as her plump rosy cheek rested on her pillow, and she composed herself to sleep, perchance to dream of Octave.

* * * * * * * *

Mr. Kennet, the father of the pretty Kate, was a wealthy merchant of New Orleans. He resided in an elegant residence on the Rue Royale, and had assembled around his wife and only daughter, an atmosphere of luxury and elegance, which made them the admiration of many of their acquaintances. Every art had been employed to make his house spacious, gorgeous and grand. Superb paintings hung on the walls. Immense book cases displayed collections of all the celebrated poets and authors of every age. Rich carpets of velvet tapestry covered the floors. Curiously carved chairs and sofas of rose wood, covered with satin damask, graced the apartments, and all the costly and rich little articles that betray the presence of woman were scattered profusely about.

The drawing rooms opened on a conservatory filled with choice flowers, and its glass walls were completely overgrown with vines of the heliotrope and wax flower. The air was laden with perfume, and as if to add new beauties to the scene of enchantment, there were here and there bird cages suspended amidst the branches of an oleander or orange tree, and through the open door the brilliantly plumed songsters would fly, to pour forth their thrilling melody from the thick branches of some Indian tree.

Mr. Kennet had also a son, a young man of twenty-one, and this made up all his family. When he was a young man he had made the acquaintance of Mary Jones's father, and the intimacy between the families had always remained unbroken. They had been schoolmates and inseparable friends in their youth, and they had never allowed the cares of life to make them forget each other. The winters, Mary spent with her father in New Orleans. The summers, always brought Mr. Kennet's family to Georgia, to the plantation of Mr. Jones.

As may well be supposed, Kate, with her wild spirits, dazzling beauty, and great fortune, was an object of interest to many of the dashing beaux of Orleans, but she remained perfectly indifferent to them, for there was a certain mad-cap in Georgia, named John Woodville, who possessed, in her childish mind, some attractions, and it is very certain she was always happier there, than she was at home. This

Kate very innocently attributed to the charms of a country life, and as we have no right to doubt the young lady's word, I suppose we must acknowledge she knew best.

The next morning, true to her promise, Kate, accompanied by her mother and friend, started out on her visit to Marcia, Mr. Kennet having informed them that they were staying at the St. Charles Hotel. They found Marcia seated in an easy chair, with a velvet cushion at her feet, and Mr. Woodville beside her, reading to her. Flora sat near her, and Marcia amused herself by curling the child's long ringlets round her fingers. She was looking very pale and feeble, but she received her visitors with that easy grace and dignity that never forsook her. Mrs. Kennet, who had never seen her before, was highly pleased with her, and gave her a pressing invitation to visit them. Marcia said:

"I shall get my father to take me, some day."

Mrs. Kennet looked surprised. She said, "I was not aware that your father was ——."

"I will set you right," said Mr. Woodville. Marcia is my adopted daughter, and it is I she honors with the name of father."

"Really, I am glad of that. I scarcely know which I ought to congratulate most, but I think, Mr. Woodville, you have a prize in such a daughter. And you, Flora, how do you like your cousin, Marcia?"

"I can't say I *like* her at all, but I *love* her dearly."

"I fear, my little cousin Flora is a partial judge of my good qualities, Mrs. Kennet. Pray do not appeal to her, if you should wish to hear unbiassed opinions."

"I should be quite satisfied to rest upon her judgment, said Mrs. Kennet."

"How long do you stay in New Orleans?" asked Kate. Mr. Woodville said:

"Perhaps, a month longer. Then, we go to Mobile, and from there home."

"To Miss Walton's home, or Georgia?" asked Mary Jones.

"Oh! to dear, dear Georgia," said Flora, gaily.

Mary Jones and Kate expressed their interest and kindly sympathy for the invalid. Marcia, smiling sweetly, thanked them for their kindness, and told them they must come every day to see her, and not wait for her visit, as it was impossible for her to observe ceremony with them. They gladly promised to comply, and the hearts of the lovely girls warmed to the gentle being whom they felt was slowly, but almost imperceptibly, passing away from earth. There was a charm in the society of the fair Marcia that drew all hearts towards her, and there was a sweetness in her manners that disarmed envy, and it might truly be said of her:

> "None see thee but to love thee,
> None know thee but to praise."

Mary Jones looked around the room. She could see no trace of Octave. Neither was his name men-

tioned by any of the party. "I am glad he is not here," she thought. And then said, in her heart, "I wish he were."

At that instant he entered the room. He spoke politely to all three of the ladies, and, advancing to Marcia, presented her with a fresh boquet of flowers. She took them, and thanked him sweetly for his kind remembrance of her, but there was nothing in her manner that could give Mary the least cause for jealousy. "He would be a monster if he was not kind to her, poor thing," she thought.

"Well, Miss Kate," asked Octave, laughing; "how comes on your trade of heart-breaking?"

"Not very flourishing, I assure you. I believe there are only six persons who have announced to me their intention to die on my account this winter. Is it not six, mother?" she asked, counting on her fingers at the same time. "There was Joe Winters, one; Colonel Marks, two; Doctor Stansberry, with the long nose, three ——."

"For shame, daughter," said Mrs. Kennet; "I cannot permit you to ridicule your friends in this manner."

"Well, but you know, mother, there is nothing in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, that is secure from his ridicule."

"Two wrongs never make a right, Kate. Never subject any one you recognize as an acquaintance and

receive as a guest, to ridicule. You cannot expect to be respected yourself, if you make little of your friends."

"Kate is very young yet," remonstrated Marcia.

"And our dear little Marcia is very old. I believe she has arrived at the advanced age of eighteen and some months. Are you not?" asked Mr. Woodville.

"Nearly nineteen," said Marcia.

"We all bow in reverence to your years," said Kate, with a merry laugh.

"Ah! you naughty girl, do you make fun of Marcia?" asked Octave, shaking his finger.

"I should much prefer making fun of you," she said, with a saucy curl of the lip.

"I would not care if you did, if it afforded one particle of pleasure to that little, wicked heart of yours."

"My heart is neither little nor wicked. You must not judge of me by your great, big, wicked self."

"If you make such sweeping accusations, I shall call for proof, Miss Kate. What did I ever do that was wicked?"

"I don't think it would puzzle me as much to tell that, as it would to tell what you ever did that was good."

That's not so bad, Kate, upon my word," said Mr. Woodville, laughing. "A few more home-thrusts like that, and your opponent will throw down his weapons, ——."

"And assume a virtue, though he has it not, of having discretion to surrender," said Octave.

"Really, we must go," said Mrs. Kennet. "I had no idea it was so late. Marcia, do not forget to come and see us, as soon as your strength will permit. I shall be most happy to receive you, and show you some of the beauties of our conservatory. I believe you are fond of flowers."

"Oh! passionately, madam."

"Well, you will find at our house flowers of every color and clime. I flatter myself New Orleans cannot boast of a more beautiful collection of plants. Good-bye, my dear child. I hope to see you, very soon."

"Kate and Mary came to kiss their young friend. Marcia drew Mary's ear close down to her face, and whispered:

"Mary, dear, come to see me, very soon, alone—I have something to tell you. Now, don't forget."

Mary raised her head in a flutter of joy. Her cheeks were suffused with a bright flush, but her color faded as she saw the look of surprise, not unmingled with displeasure, with which Octave regarded her. Her poor, little, fluttering heart was chilled. Marcia saw the look, and could not altogether repress a feeling of anger that Octave should treat with this chilling indifference the girl he had wooed, and had once determined should be his wife. There was a plan in her mind, however, by which she sought to reconcile all these differences.

That evening, Mr. Woodville dined out, and Flora had gone to a little girls' party, to which she had been invited. Marcia and Octave were alone together. Seating himself near her, he said:

"At last, I have the opportunity I have so long and eagerly sought. Will you listen to me, fair cousin, for a few moments?"

"With pleasure."

"I have, for some time past, had a confession to make to you, which, although you already know all the circumstances, it seems but proper you should hear from my lips.

"You must know that your illness and consequent debility have been caused by me. My mother told you all, but I have come to you to seek your forgiveness for the wrong I have done you. Tell me, if you have no feeling of anger to him who has thus turned your day into darkness—who has strewn your path with thorns, and who has, in short, been the bane of your life?"

"I have long since forgiven you, Octave, and have never ceased to pray that God might extract from your heart the bitterness of self-reproach. Oh! believe me, when I assure you that I do not cherish in my heart one atom of resentment towards you, and I have often regretted that I was forced to give you one moment's pain.

"You give me pain, sweet cousin? Ah! you have been the joy, the hope, the beacon-star of life. Do

not think there could be pain associated in my mind with aught so fair and lovely."

"Listen to me, Octave, dear Octave. I have heard you. Will you not listen to me, now, calmly, quietly, dispassionately, while I tell you something that is on my mind?"

She laid her delicate white hand on his. She gazed at him with those gentle eyes, filled with a look of soft entreaty. She had called him Octave—dear Octave. What could all this mean? The blood coursed rapidly through his veins. Did she love him, now? he asked himself. Were her feelings changed towards him? Oh! joy, joy. He could not restrain his emotions. He raised the tiny hand to his lips. He pressed burning kisses upon it, and again, in a voice broken with emotion, poured forth his tale of love.

Marcia listened quietly. For a moment a deep flush passed over her face, leaving it again paler than before. She felt that she had been misunderstood, and was about to explain herself, when a sigh sounded in her ear. She looked up, surprised, and saw Mary Jones standing before her, trembling with the intensity of her emotions. How much of the scene she had witnessed, Marcia could not tell, but it was evident she had seen enough to rouse her jealousy. She cast a look of mild reproach upon Octave, and then abruptly left the room.

The whole had passed so quickly that no one had spoken a word. Poor Marcia realized to the full all

the unpleasantness of her situation, and making a strong effort to control her feelings, she said:

"Alas! Octave, see what you have done."

"What have I done? Mary Jones is nothing to me. I owe her nought but cold politeness."

"Nay, but you owe her more than that; and, if she is not now offended past recall, I hope to persuade you to regard her as I do. I fear she will not forgive this last, however."

"That would be a matter of great indifference to me."

"Nay, Octave, hear me. I have that to say to you which regards your own happiness as well as Mary's. Cast aside all those unkind feelings, and listen attentively to me.

"You sought the love of a young, innocent girl. She gave you her heart, but she was too proud to confess all at once that it was so. Some of her playful tricks piqued your vanity. You were jealous, and in a fit of haughty disdain you left her. You saw me. Your heart was idle. You needed some stimulant, some excitement to keep you from dwelling upon the past. You had promised to wrap yourself in your mantle of pride, but your efforts were ineffectual, for the ghost of your past happiness was before you."

"How have you thus acquired the power to read my heart?"

"It matters not. Do not interrupt me. It suffices

for us both to know that I have read aright. You saw me, and loved me, not with the same love you had felt for Mary, but a devotion which would have made you sacrifice your life to my whims. Had I attempted to make you jealous, you would have borne it patiently, and never have sought to blame me, or call me to account for it. It would have been sufficient to you that I did it, to make it right in your sight. In a word, you looked upon the poor governess as your superior, and you venerated her as you should have revered and worshiped your God."

"Tell me how it is that you unravel the secret workings of my heart, and seem to know me better than I do myself?"

"By a simple effort of will, I have made myself acquainted with your thoughts. But, let me go on. This impiety, this devotion to the creature that was due to the Creator, met its punishment, and you found coldness where you had hoped to meet with love. Hoped, did I say? Nay, that were a poor word to express your feelings. You had fiercely resolved to find love. Every power of your soul was concentrated in your passion, and you would not hear the reply I gave you. You impiously believed that God would not have permitted such an idolatry to take possession of your heart, if He did not intend to crown your love with success. Poor man, to believe that God had anything to do with the passion of your heart. Had I married you, do you suppose God would have made

the union? I have often thought of the words in the marriage ceremony: 'Whom God has joined.' Sure enough, 'whom God has joined, let no man put asunder.' But how are you going to find out whom God has joined?

"Wealth, station, every blessing was in your favor. You cast all upon the die, and you lost all.

"Let me analyze, if possible, the feelings that influenced me in that refusal. There had been no coquetry on my part to lead you on, and then reject you. I call God to witness that I would have scorned the thought. I was ignorant of your motives and feelings, and your actions oft-times appeared strange to me. I had heard it tacitly admitted that you were to be married to Mary Jones. I never thought much about it, for the subject was not one of interest to me, but, I believed at times, from observations you made use of, there had been a kind of lover's quarrel between you. It was not my affair, however, and I soon banished the subject.

"When, upon that memorable morning, Mary concealed in the forest, heard your declaration of love, and I was first awakened to a sense of my position, I must confess to you that my emotions were of a most painful nature. It grieved me to give you pain, and yet, I was well convinced that love had never yet existed in my heart, and love alone could induce me to become a wife. But I do not wish you to suppose that, because I had never loved, I was entirely ignorant of

the nature of the passion. The many books I had read, had sufficiently developed in my mind an appreciation of the sentiment, to make me regard you with pity, for, said I, suppose it was I who loved as he does, and loved hopelessly, how desolate and sad I should feel. Poor Octave, I thought, would that I could return your affection. But this was impossible. Pity, in this instance, would not give birth to love, and although I manifested towards you all the affection of a sister, yet you lacked the faculty to rouse the dormant powers of love.

"I now felt that my position would be unpleasant in your family, and I sought to find some reason to return to my mother. But God, who sees not as man sees, and who moves in a mysterious way, had another fate reserved for me. I was stricken down on that very morning, and in a few hours I was looking death in the face. But let me pass over these details, dear Octave. They cannot fail to give you pain. I come to your second declaration, made and seconded by your mother. Here was a renewal of all the feelings that had before caused me so much uneasiness. Alas! I exclaimed, I am then doomed to make the misery of those who love me. 'Not so,' said a still small voice within me. 'Be patient, be firm and true, and you shall become a blessing, where now you seem the reverse.' Octave, the hour is come. The hour dimly foreshadowed to me then, has now arrived, and I see in it the fulfilment of the promise. Happiness is before

you. You have but to reach forth your hand and the prize is yours; and to see you happy will be one of the greatest pleasures this world can give.

"I have but one thing more to say to you. Mary Jones loves you now, and always has. Go back to the first warm affection of your heart. It is, perhaps, less devoted, more selfish than your last, but I doubt not you will be blessed in it, and at all events you can make the happiness of a true-hearted girl, who loves you with all the self-sacrificing devotion of a woman. Go seek her pardon, dear Octave, for the past, and be happy."

"Noble-minded, excellent woman, and do you think that after having doomed you to a life of sorrow and sickness, I could leave you desolate and not seek to surround you with all the delicate attentions of love? Do you think, my poor Marcia, I could revel in the happiness of wedded life, with a gay, rosy-lipped bride, all smiles and blushes, while you sat, pale and stricken, with your young innocent heart crushed within you? Oh! no, Marcia, never."

"Then, Octave, you refuse to accord me the only boon I ever craved at your hands?"

"I would make any sacrifice in the world for you, Marcia. I would lay down my life, at this moment, if it could restore you to health. I am free. Bound by no ties, I can love you. I have a right to do so. Although you remain indifferent to me, it is a pleasure to me to be near you, to wait upon you, to indulge my

affection toward you, and I make no secret of it. I care not who knows it. But were I married, you must see how widely different the case would be. I could no longer indulge these emotions of tenderness, which in honor would belong to my wife. My love for you, and my duty to her, would be a constant warfare within me, and I should end by being more miserable than ever.

"And then, again, I should be debarred from the pleasure of your society. You would very justly be shocked at the sight of the man who gave you his heart, and swore with his lips to love another. Oh, no, Marcia, I cannot make this sacrifice of myself, even to please you."

"But, Octave, I will not banish you from me. On the contrary, I will have you and Mary constantly with me. Indeed, if you knew how I had set my heart on this match, you would not refuse me. I see now the weakness of the feelings you profess for me, since you will not please me even in this small matter."

"Come, cousin, I will compromise with you. You will acknowledge Mary to be a girl of spirit. Let me go to her, and tell her frankly all you say. I will tell her how I love you, and you only. If she will marry me under these circumstances I will wed her. Does that please you?"

"Nay, Octave, consider. Do you not owe something to the girl who has loved and cherished your

memory? You it was who first sought her affection. Do not trample in the dust, the fond loving heart she has given you."

"What, then, would you have? Must I go to her and tell her I still entertain the same feelings for her I did when first I sought her for my bride, and that I have come to claim the fulfilment of her former promise? Now, Marcia, you know this would be absolute falsehood."

"Surely, Octave, you must have tact enough in these matters to proffer your suit in gallant terms, without being guilty of the sin of falsehood, and without wounding the feelings of a lovely girl, whose only weakness is her attachment to you."

"Doubtless, you consider it a great weakness for any one even to like me, you hard-hearted girl; but no, I will not say that. I will be just, and acknowledge that you are the loveliest of your sex. Oh! Marcia, could I have been blessed with your love, I should have been indeed happy. I cannot calmly make up my mind to lose you forever. But I will do your bidding. You shall see how obediently I will sacrifice myself to please you. I will make my declaration to Mary Jones, but I think I will honestly confess to her what I should think she must know already. Indeed, she ought to know that she has you to thank for her happiness. And now, having dismissed this subject, let us talk of something more

pleasant. Have you no questions to ask about the children? They sent you a world of love."

"Oh! yes. I have longed for an opportunity to talk about them all. I should like much to see them again. How is my sweet Laurestina? Has she forgotten me?"

"You would not think so, if you could hear her talking about you. She is fat and rosy, and learns rapidly. She seems quite fond of her teacher, who, by the by, is a most excellent man. I feel a friendship for him, different from any one else. I consider his character worthy of imitation."

"So I thought from the first."

"Then you were pleased with him?"

"I judged from what I saw of him, he would be conscientious in the discharge of his duties to the children. You have not told me any thing about Gregory; I think that boy is a prodigy. He has talents that will lead him to great eminence, and a heart that will win him the friendship of all who know him."

"Gregory is certainly an uncommon boy. He is making great progress at school. It pleases me very much to know that you admire him, for he is my favorite. Would you believe that John, lazy, harem-scarem John, the terror of all sober matrons, is actually settling down quietly, and studying with a zeal and faithfulness, you would scarcely believe possible, without you witnessed it yourself."

"Indeed. I am glad to hear it. Has he at last succeeded in mastering those Greek characters that were such a terror to him?"

"Long since, and he has been translating, for months, quite handsomely. To tell the truth, Harry Percy has a way of teaching, that wins the hearts of his pupils. I consider that he has achieved a miracle in the case of John Woodville, and I do regret exceedingly, that at the end of the year he leaves us and returns to New York."

"And why does he do so?"

"I know not. There is a mystery about it, that I have never been able, or rather, I should say, have never sought to fathom."

"How does your mother like the idea of another niece, Octave? Was she pleased to learn that father had adopted me as his child?"

"Indeed she was, sweet cousin mine; and she bade me tell you she would count the days till you returned once more to her presence, never to leave it again."

"Excellent woman. I am not ungrateful for her affection, and there is only one thing I could ask for more."

"And what is that, my cousin? You must not hide your wishes from me."

"Nay, it is no great secret, that you should care for the possession of it, as if it were a matter of importance to you. It is simply my desire to be with my mother and brother. I cannot reconcile myself to

this painful separation, and I feel as if the few months I spend on earth would be much happier if blessed with my mother's smiles, and my dear little Benny's artless affection. When father talks of taking me back to New York, the doctor looks grum, shakes his head and says nothing, but then, you know, Octave, there is a great deal expressed in this ominous shaking of the head."

"Don't pretend to mind what the doctors say or do. Many of them are about as wise as so many apes, and as to this notion you have got about dying, it is all nonsense. You cannot die in this genial climate, and with this balmy air. It is impossible for death to reach you here."

"You mean kindness by what you say, cousin, but do not seek to unnerve me and make me regard with terror what is inevitable. I need rather your support and encouragement, and I must learn to look boldly in the face that doom which is written in characters of living fire on my heart."

"Oh! Marcia, how can I hear you talk thus, and not suffer all the torturing anguish of remorse? Ah, Mary, Mary, I could curse you now."

"Do not upbraid her. Poor girl, she has had her punishment ere this in her own conscience, without doubt. Forgive her, Octave, and remember that—

"To err is human; to forgive divine."

We need but to look within our own hearts to find enough to reform and improve. Let us leave to God

the punishment of others, and recall the beautiful lines, entitled, 'Speak kindly to the erring;' which close thus—

"Speak kindly to the erring—
Thou yet mayst lead him back,
With holy words, and tones of love,
From misery's thorny track:
Forget not thou hast often sinned,
And sinful yet mayst be;
Deal kindly with the erring one,
As God has dealt with thee."

But tell me, Octave, when will you go to Mary Jones and make her happy? The quicker the better, you know."

"I will go, to-night—the instant my uncle comes in."

"That is right. There is nothing like dispatch. Then you must come to me, early to-morrow morning, and tell me the success of your mission, will you not? Now don't look so disconsolate. One would suppose you had suicide in contemplation. It is droll to see a man look so solemn when he is on the eve of committing matrimony."

"And it is still more droll for a man to marry a woman he does not love, merely to please the woman he does. This is an enigma, but it is your wish, and I know no other law. But, Marcia, are you not afraid to urge me to take these false vows?"

"Not in the least, for once married to Mary you cannot help but love her, and the affection you bear

me will grow holier and purer in its character; and you will at last regard me as a sister. When I have thus succeeded in reconciling your two passions, so as to do violence to neither, I shall be indeed happy, and shall feel that I have not lived altogether in vain, for perhaps without my interference you might have followed your uncle's example, and lived to be a childless old man."

"That is not such an unblessed life with Marcia for my daughter;" said Mr. Woodville, entering the apartment and kissing her affectionately.

"I go to fulfil your request, Marcia," said Octave, and raising her hand to his lips, he breathed his blessings upon it and was gone to fulfil his destiny.

CHAPTER XI.

"Deal gently then and suffer me to feel
The vestal flame I vainly sought to quell;
It shall not wrong or pain thee; but in need
Shall be thy comfort, and shall serve thee well.
Though timid as the fawn that loves the wood,
I will defy all powers to do thee good."

I do not know what will be thought of the feeling that prompted our heroine to act in the manner she did. It is sufficient to me that she did it, for it to gain my approval, knowing, as I do, that her only motive was a pure and disinterested desire for the happiness of others.

Octave took his way, with a wild recklessness of manner, down the Rue Royal in the direction of the residence of Mr. Kennet. He had not proceeded far, when some one called him by name, and when he turned to see who had accosted him, he recognized a young merchant of the town of D., in Georgia, who stood conversing with a tall gentleman, that he presented to Octave as Doctor Stansberry. The very same before-mentioned personage who figured in Kate Kennet's conversation of the morning. The party were soon conversing gaily together, and agreed to repair to a neighboring hotel, to have a regular lark. Two hours passed by, and at length Octave, elated with wine, recalled his promise to Marcia, to go at once to seek Mary, and nerved to his task, which he could not help feeling to be a hard one, tore himself away from his gay companions, and started once more on his errand. He reached the house and rang the bell. A negro slave answered the summons, "is Miss Jones in?"

"She is—would massa please follow him to the drawing room?"

Octave entered this fairy scene, which I have already described. Kate and her father and mother were there. Gay, brilliant, sarcastic, she sat, queen of beauty, surrounded by a circle of the most eligible young men in New Orleans, all striving to please the capricious beauty, who regarded them with much less respect than she did her pet monkey.

Mr. Kennet expressed his pleasure at Octave's visit. Mrs. Kennet received him graciously, and Kate with a demure smile; but Mary was no where to be seen.

For a moment Octave was glad that such was the case, but the next he regretted it, for he had made up his mind resolutely and firmly how to act, and the sooner he got through the unpleasant business the better. He determined not to retract, but to perform Marcia's wishes at all hazards. Putting a bold face on the matter, and willing even to risk the quizing of the merciless little torturer, Kate, he asked her where Miss Jones was, this evening?

"She retired to her room quite soon after tea, with a sick head-ache. Shall I tell her you want to see her?"

"Oh no, do not disturb her now upon my account; but please say to her that I will call to-morrow morning, and that I wish to see her particularly."

"I will certainly do so, but pray do not hurry away so, merely because Miss Jones is not visible."

"I would stay with great pleasure, but Miss Walton is an invalid you know, and I don't like to neglect her, so you will please excuse me to-night."

Octave made his adieu and retired to return at once to Marcia and Mr. Woodville, and he sat up till a late hour amusing them with the wild gayety of his spirits. Marcia thought she had never seen him appear to so much advantage, and she was at a loss to

reconcile his mirth with the sacrifice she had imposed upon him. She knew not that he was dissembling his real feelings, lest he should give her pain.

When, at length, they separated for the night, Octave in the solitude of his own chamber, gave himself up to the bitterness of his feelings, and walked, with wild impatience up and down, muttering to himself, and exciting his already agitated mind. But, after a time, he grew calmer, and sitting down by his writing table he leaned his face upon his hands, and fell into a fit of musing. Could we have looked into his heart, we might have seen some such thoughts as these:

"Let me imitate her example, and think less of self. Has she not acted nobly? What motive could have prompted her, but Mary's happiness and my own?"

Oh, Marcia, you are too good for me. I feel that sensibly. Dear girl, your lonely heart pines for your mother's presence, and it shall not pine in vain. Let me see how I shall manage the affair.—Ah, I have it."

Octave unlocked his writing desk and wrote two letters. One was to his mother, the other to his cousin John. I will copy them, in order that you may become acquainted with their contents.

NEW ORLEANS, January 20th, 18—.

My dear Mother:

I have arrived, as you see, at my journey's end, and have seen Marcia, Flora, and my uncle.

The two last are in excellent health, but the former I cannot help trembling for. I fear not only from what I have seen myself, but from what the physician has told me, that a few months at most must close her pilgrimage on earth. The anguish I experience as this truth forces itself upon me, will doubtless be understood by your affectionate heart, and I will not attempt to dwell upon my feelings.

Marcia bears her fate with a resignation and obedience to the Will of God quite touching in one so young. My heart, that has always rebelled against religion, begins to acknowledge its wonderful power, at the sight of this young girl, so fitted by her superior accomplishments to adorn the world, so constituted to enjoy its pleasures, and yet resolutely, and with a heroism worthy of her high intelligence, looking calmly in the face a doom, sad enough to intimidate the stoutest heart. Sometimes she gives way to the depression of her feelings, but oftener, to amuse my uncle and make him light-hearted, she mingles in conversation with all the playful grace which is so natural to her, and seems for the moment to forget the heavy sorrow which has mingled itself with every drop in her cup of life.

You know, my dear mother, it is our duty as well as our wish to make every atonement in our power to one who suffers thus severely for my crime. Marcia told me to-day that she had only one thing left to wish for, and with me her slightest wish is a com-

mand, as you well know. She longs for the society of her mother and brother, and as it is impossible for her to go to New York, I have been thinking of another means to bring them together.

From what I can glean of my uncle's intentions, he will only remain here a few weeks longer, until Marcia is weary of the place. We shall then visit Mobile, and after remaining there some weeks, will return to Georgia. Now, it is my desire that you write, as delicately as you can, your wish that Mrs. Walton should visit us about the first of March, by which time we shall either have returned, or be on our way home. It will be neccessary to hint, in delicate terms, Marcia's failing health, and endeavor to prepare her mind for the loss she must sustain; and yet I would not have you altogether deprive her of hope. None can know better than yourself, my dear mother, how to word such a letter. When written you can intrust it to John, and I will write him, by this mail, full instructions how to act, in going on to bring her. I think it would be useless for him to start till late in February, allowing time for the journey there and back by the first of March. Should any alarming symptoms occur, I will, however, instantly apprise you, and then he can set out at once.

I am aware that I need not urge upon you any reason why you should perform my request, satisfied as I am in my own mind that your kind heart fully sympathizes with your affectionate son,

OCTAVE.

P. S. I forgot to say that I am going to be married. Were it not for that, I would go myself to New York after Mrs. Walton, but indeed I cannot endure separation for a moment from my tenderly-loved Marcia.

O. W.

The other letter, to John Woodville, ran thus:

NEW ORLEANS, January 20th, 18—.

My dear John:

Although you are such a wild boy, I have deemed it expedient to intrust you with some business, which, if well performed, will not lose its reward in a certain quarter indicated by two K's—and I sincerely trust that the natural kindness of your heart will induce you to throw aside for a time your character as a madcap; and merge all your energy in the business I set before you.

It is a melancholy fact, my dear boy, that the lovely girl who left her Northern home to find health and healing in our sunny climate, is fast fading away from earth. Nothing can save her. The fiat has gone forth, and the sands in the life-glass are daily wasting. I shall pass over all my own feelings in this matter, and come to speak of the duty which you are called upon to perform.

It is necessary for some one to go for Mrs. Walton, and break to her, in delicate terms, the continued illness of her daughter. I have chosen you for this mission, and I want you to be her traveling companion

to Georgia. You must try, by every possible means, to soothe her distress, surround her with comforts, and pay her every delicate attention, that you would your own mother if she were living.

I depend upon you, John, to take this matter in your hands, and to act with all becoming dignity and propriety, and I do not fear that you will fail in any part of your duty. Mother will tell you when to start for New York.

Give my respects to Harry Percy, and tell him I will write to him in a few days. In the meantime assure him of my high regard. Give love to all the children, and believe me

Your affectionate uncle,

OCTAVE WOODVILLE.

The letters written, sealed and directed, and sent by a waiter of the hotel to the office, Octave retired, to gain in sleep some hours of oblivion from a fate which he considered hopeless and sad beyond compare.

The next morning, after breakfast, with his uncle and cousin, he left the hotel and went to call on Mary Jones. He was shown into a little, private parlor, and after waiting some considerable time, Mary, pale and dejected, entered noiselessly and approached him.

Octave rose and advanced towards her with a smile, which was instantly checked however, by the serious manner with which she received him. The usual

common-places of the day were canvassed, but Octave, anxious to please Marcia, resolved to open at once the object of his visit. He said—

"Let us forget the past, Mary, and be the friends we were when first I sought your hand. Ah, we were happy then, for the world was bright with hope, and oft

——— "At noon
We sat beneath the arching vines and wondered
Why Earth could be unhappy, while the Heavens
Still left us youth and love."——

Since then Mary, I have been cold to you. You have suffered much on my account and I come to make you every reparation in my power. I sought your love, and then left you in a fit of jealousy. I ask your pardon for all the harshness I have used towards you. I come to you this morning to renew my vows at the shrine of your faithful heart, to ask you to be my wife, and I promise to make you as happy as I possibly can. Will you accept me now, Mary, and be content to waive coqueting for the present?"

Although the words were all that they should have been on the occasion, yet the manner was cold, stern and haughty, that of a person who confers a favor rather than of one who seeks it; but Mary was blind to this, or rather she imagined she saw in it a contrition for the past, which his proud spirit felt and yet struggled against acknowledging. She believed the scene she had partly witnessed the last evening was

misunderstood on her part. Perhaps she thought Octave was at that moment showing his love for her, by a reconciliation Marcia had proposed between them. She gave herself up to the joyous emotions that filled her heart, and crowned her girlish love.

Do you accuse her of want of spirit? Remember that Octave had purposely avoided saying aught to her that could wound her feelings, and he concluded to make a compromise with his conscience, that he might spare her the pain of knowing that his love for another had alone brought him to terms with her. I believe, with very good reason, that if Mary had known the state of his feelings, she would have spurned him from her in righteous anger; nor could you have blamed her if she had.

"Dear Mary," asked Octave, "will you accept or refuse me? I want yes or no, and I think you will not try to tease me any more, now that you have found out the weakness of my temper."

"This is my answer, then," said Mary, and she laid her innocent head upon his shoulder, and burst into tears, not tears of sorrow, but joy, joy so great that her full heart was forced to seek relief. A woman's remedy, 'tis true, but who shall say it was not a good one?

Now, although Octave had steeled himself against softness; although he no longer loved Mary Jones, and though by his very present offer of marriage he was only obeying a mandate of the passion which

reigned supreme in his heart for another, yet he could not, all unmoved, behold her tears, the cause of which he could not interpret; neither could he resist the gentle emotions which stole over him, as he felt the touch of her innocent head upon his shoulder, laid there in the holy trust and confidence of her girlish heart. Thoughts of earlier days crowded around him. He recalled the time when, pure and innocent, he had shrunk from every thought of evil. Since then his soul had become contaminated, but still the old feelings of innocence and truth hovered around him. His heart softened as he gazed on the gentle girl at his side, and yielding to the tender emotions of his soul, he passed his arm around her waist, and turning her face towards his own, he kissed away the tears that sullied her cheeks, and pressing his lips upon her pure white brow, he promised himself that he would seek her happiness always in preference to his own, and never suffer aught of sorrow to cloud the pathway of her life.

An hour quickly passed away, and Octave, rousing himself, said he must return to Marcia. She would be lonely without him.

"Do you know," said Mary, playfully, "I was half inclined to be jealous of Marcia, last night?"

Mary could not have chosen a more unfitting subject. A scowl, black as midnight, passed over Octave's face, and he said sternly,—

"If ever a thought of that kind presents itself

again, I pray you will hide it from me. Indeed, Mary, nothing will please me more than to see you devote yourself and your kindest attentions to that sweet girl. She will not be spared to us long and I—I love her—as a sister. (God forgive me the story.")

"You have scarcely need to mention your wish, dear Octave. I look upon Marcia as something better than human. She seems to me like an angel, removed from all the failings and short-comings of poor human nature."

"You say well, she is an angel, or like one. I must return to her at once. Come and see her to-day. Stay with her as much as you can. Poor thing, she misses and pines for her mother."

"I will come after dinner; this evening."

"That is right. Now good bye. Be a good girl."

"One word before you go, Octave. *Do you love me with your whole heart?*"

"Oh! exacting woman. I will not satisfy your curiosity. Be satisfied that I think you a very nice little girl."

A hurried kiss, a pressure of the hand, and he was gone. Gone to the presence of her, before whom Mary, and all the devotion of her true heart were forgotten. Ah! had she but known how cold and indifferent he was to her; what a struggle it cost him to marry her;—but why this list of arguments? She did not know—she was deceived in him, and such

things happen every day. This is no overdrawn picture. I will depict you one that happened a short time ago in New York, which I know to be strictly true.

I knew a young man, a few years ago, a gay, wild, high-spirited fellow,—the life of every party. His face was always lit up with smiles, and he seemed formed for the enjoyment of earth's greatest happiness. His mother was dead, but his father doated on him and indulged his every whim. There resided in the family a young girl, who had been left an orphan, in destitute circumstances, by a cousin or some other relation, and the two children had been brought up together like brother and sister.

One summer, young Graham was attacked with illness, and after having recovered from it, he went, by the desire of his father, to Canada, where he got acquainted with a young and lovely girl, to whom he became very soon warmly attached. He proposed and was accepted, and the young lovers gave themselves up to all the happiness which was to be expected from their sincere affection.

But, alas, the dream of love was of short continuance. One day, Graham received a letter from his adopted sister, stating that the cholera had broken out in New York, that his father had been attacked with it, and was then lying very low, and wished to see his son immediately.

Graham took an affectionate but hasty farewell of his betrothed, and promised her soon to return. He then started for home, which he reached just in time to receive his father's dying wish and blessing. The old man's eyes brightened as he saw his son. Taking his hand, he placed it in that of his ward, and said,— "Take her, my son, and God bless you." The next moment he was a corpse.

There was a struggle in the heart of that poor boy which for some time made him miserable. He dearly loved his father, and he called to mind his many acts of kindness and affection, and wept at the remembrance. And again, he found that his fair young cousin was very much attached to him, and regarded him as her future husband. He resolved upon his duty, conquered his love and sacrificed his own happiness and that of the fair English girl on the altar of filial duty. He married his father's ward, and I know he has striven to make her happy; but he often leaves her to visit a quiet spot, far away to the north, where a slab of pure white marble, bearing the simple inscription of "Helen, aged seventeen," marks the last resting place of his first and only love.

But, to return to our story. Octave entered the room where Marcia sat, and throwing himself upon the sofa, said,—

"Well, there, I have done it."

"Done what?" asked Mr. Woodville.

"Proposed to Mary Jones and been accepted," said Octave, with the air of a man who is just going to be led to the stake as a martyr.

"That was the best thing I ever knew you to do. Who put it into your head?" asked Mr. Woodville.

"Do you mean by that to intimate, uncle, that no good thing could originate in my head?"

"On the contrary, I know a great many have originated there, but none, I believe, so self-sacrificing as this."

"Then you appreciate it, uncle?"

"I do, my boy, I do, and I trust that you may be happy in your wedded life, and I doubt not that you will."

"Blessed with the love of such a girl as Mary Jones, you cannot well help being happy," said Marcia, with a smile so sweet that it soothed Octave's spirit, and reconciled him to his duty. He drew up a chair and took a seat beside her, and Flora said to him, with a mischievous smile,—

"So, Mary Jones is to be my aunt, after all?"

"Be quiet, you tease, or I will tangle all your worsted."

"You would be afraid to do it, before Marcia, and besides you would not find it much to your interest in the end, for I would give these slippers I am working to somebody else."

"And that is the way you would punish me, you spiteful thing. Now, pray be quiet. Marcia, talk to me, wont you?"

"What shall I talk about, Octave?"

"Tell me how you feel, what you think; any thing, in short, that relates to yourself, and will fill my ears with the sound of your voice."

"I feel well, Octave; indeed I can complain of nothing but this extreme weakness. I can not ride or walk, and sometimes talk without feeling fatigued; but I do not think that, in this sensible decay of my physical powers, I feel the least weakness of my mind; on the contrary, my perceptive powers seem to be quickened, and things that formerly appeared obstruent and intricate to me, are now clear as the sun at noon-day."

"And to what do you attribute the change?"

"I know not, unless it be that the soul, as it throws off its mortal tenement and soars higher and nearer its native heaven, partakes more and more of the divine nature from which it emanated. Indeed, I think this must be the case, for ever since I have looked upon death as certain in a short time, I have felt within me an intelligence which amazes me. I look back with wonder at the ties that bound me to earth, and seemed so dear, and dear they are still; but infinitely more precious to me is the love of the Savior who has redeemed, and the God who has upheld me. Beyond this vale of tears, there is no more time, and it will seem but like the twinkling of an eye, when all I leave behind me here, will join me in that better world to which I go."

"And must you go? Must you leave me, my poor child?" asked Mr. Woodville, deeply affected.

"It must be, dear father, and it is better thus. What is life at the best. Is it not a stormy sea on which we are tossed from the cradle to the grave? Of what avail are its honors, its gold or fame? Are they not all perishable? Does not the experience of old age daily teach us, that happiness is not to be found in aught earth can bestow? Ah! believe me, the human soul was created for a higher destiny. Nothing this world has to give, can satisfy the yearnings of the deathless spirit, and hence it is that happiness is a phantom that smiles but to deceive us, for God's own presence is necessary to the perfection of the bliss which shall fill to the uttermost the spark that emanated from Himself: or in other words, the soul is incapable in itself of realizing its own capacities, and can be awakened to clear perceptions only by the animating presence of its Maker,—God.

"Thus it is, that, failing in health, knowing that I must leave this world, ere I have tasted of its cup of pleasure; ere I have strayed through its flowery walks that look so tempting; or plucked one of the beautiful blossoms that grow on the way-side, I can say, with a pious trust and holy confidence in the Father, I loved the dear ones thou didst give me; I might have chosen at least to live till I had tried the realities of life, and proved to my mother a solace in her declining years; but, by thy holy revealings of the spirit-

land; by the glimpses of heaven thou hast shown me through the starry skies; by all I know of thy infinite love, I can say,—let me die—let me die.

'The world can never give,
The bliss for which we sigh;
'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die.'"

CHAPTER XII.

"Go, gladly, with true sympathy,
Where want's pale victims pine;
And bid life's sweetest smiles again,
Along their pathway shine."

There was joy and merriment in Mr. Kennet's house. Many lights shone through the richly embroidered curtains. The hall door was thrown open, and as the numerous carriages drove up and deposited their occupants on the side walk, they were received by liveried servants, and shown into the dressing rooms.

"Pray, what is going on here?" asked a young lady who was passing, leaning on the arm of a gentleman.

"Nothing but a wedding," was the reply.

Let us enter. You and I are privileged characters, you know. Let us see for ourselves the interior of this splendid mansion.

You have already been introduced to the elegant drawing rooms of Mr. Kennet. Imagine them lighted with gas burners, incased in richly cut shades of rose color, diffusing that dreamy light so inexpressibly soothing to the senses, and you may form some idea of the exquisite beauty of the scene. The paintings, with their superb frames and gorgeous coloring, the rich carpets and elegant furniture, covered with yellow satin damask, and then, opening before you, the conservatory, lighted with its Chinese lanterns of blue, pink and yellow silk, hanging amid the clustering vine leaves, formed a picture of dazzling splendor. But let us not except that portion of the scene which was like the stars are to the dark and rayless night, namely, the splendid, bewitching, black-eyed, raven-haired belles of Orleans. None but those who have seen them, can form any idea of the perfect clearness of complexion, rich beauty of the thick, waving hair, and bewildering brightness of the intensely black-eyes which characterize these houries of the sunny South. And now to see them dressed in a style only understood by the French; a mingling of elegance and simplicity; a perfect adaptation of color and style to the peculiar appearance and figure of each; to see the glistening of diamonds from amid the black, braided hair; the thousand fires of rubies, strung in chains and twined around the most exquisite throats in the world; the rich beauty of emeralds, with their superb settings of gold, was enough to make you think that earth has

really charms, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary.

But see—here comes a vision of beauty, not such as I have been describing, but the very reverse, and yet not less lovely from contrast. Light auburn hair, blue eyes, and a fair wax-like face, rarely seen but in the children of the North. Such was Marcia. Her dress was of the purest white, and her only ornament that of a meek and quiet spirit. Her cheek seemed to rival her dress in snowy whiteness, and yet she was the loveliest of the lovely, and the fairest of the fair. Like those light, airy beings of the imagination, that flit around us in dreams, she walked among them, and the gay crowd parted to let her pass, with that instinctive delicacy which is ever paid in the circles of the rich and nobly born, to those whose virtues more than beauty make them pre-eminent.

Will you forgive our fair heroine, if, as she took her seat, and her beautiful eyes wandered over the scene of elegance and taste which surrounded her, she thought, for one moment, of the sad contrast her own fate presented, and wept one tear, wrung from the memory of departed hope? Had she not done so, she had been either less or more than human.

Many of the gay assemblage knew Marcia, and had met her previously at the soirees of the hotels, but there were others who pressed around with eager curiosity, and beseiged their more favored friends for introductions. Nothing pleased Mr. Woodville so much

as these marks of attention to the fondly-loved child of his adoption.

It is a singular circumstance that these Southern men, surrounded as they are by the most brilliant beauty, often turn from it wearied, to welcome the fair Northerner, who is not, in my opinion, half so lovely. I think it must be novelty that attracts them, for it seems to me that our Northern beauty becomes quite tame and common-place beside her Southern sister. Of course, I do not speak individually, for I have found specimens of beauty in every city I have visited.

The Reverend Mr. S. was announced, and immediately the bridal party entered and took their places before him. Mary looked lovely, as all brides do, and the snowy veil, and wreath of orange blossoms, culled from Mr. Kennet's conservatory, became her well. Octave stood erect and manly beside her, and Marcia thought she never had seen him look so well. The ceremony was performed that was to bind them together for life, and the fair, blushing bride received the congratulations of her friends, foremost of whom was Marcia.

If you supposed in the commencement of this story, that all difficulties and differences of opinion would be cleared away, and Marcia would become the bride of the wealthy planter, you have now learned your mistake. In works of romance it is quite necessary that some suitor, possessed of immense wealth, should ap-

pear and wed the heroine, but as this story is written from real life, where this rarely occurs, you will pardon me if I disappoint your expectations in this particular.

At an early hour, Marcia, fatigued with the amusements of the evening, stole away, accompanied by her father, and as she left far behind the brilliant scene, the happy bride, and the gay crowd of fashion and beauty, she had an inward satisfaction at the thought that it was her exertions which had brought about this happy issue. If she felt a little pride at her success, I think she may be forgiven, when we call to mind that her only object in the whole matter had been the good of others.

When quietly seated in their parlor at the St. Charles, Marcia sank into one of those reveries, which were for her another state of existence, in which she forgot the presence of her friends. Mr. Woodville, anxious to arouse her, said,—

"Come, my daughter, let me know your thoughts. If they are pleasant, I will share them; if the contrary, I will seek to dispel them."

"I was only trying, dear father, to look through the vail that separates us from the future, and see if happiness will be the lot of those young beings I saw married to-night. Sometimes I reproach myself for having urged Octave on to the decisive step, knowing as I did that he loved me. Do you blame me, father?'

"Surely not, my child. Had I seen aught amiss in the course you pursued, I would have warned you before it was too late."

"So I thought, and I have rested in the hope that Octave would soon transfer to Mary, the love he lavished hopelessly on me."

"That he will certainly do, and in the meantime give yourself no uneasiness whatever. In a few weeks he will be madly in love with Mary, and will wonder how he could ever have been indifferent to her beauty. Depend upon it, these young men have seldom any stability of character. They do not known their own minds two hours together. At one moment they kneel at your feet, and swear eternal fidelity to you, and at the end of a week or a month, they are a thousand miles away, repeating the same words, with the same looks of tenderness and devotion, to some other fair beauty, they had never before seen or heard of."

"And is it thus with all your sex?"

"On the contrary, there are many true-hearted men who never forget their first love, and whose hearts know but one passion, that which comes to them in youth, a vision of beauty and innocence, which becomes the guiding star of existence, the sharer of all their joys and sorrows, the fond and faithful wife, tender, earnest and true, kind and affectionate in the bright noon-day of prosperity, and unchanged amid the storms of adversity. Together they journey on, and progressing beyond the days and years of youth

and middle age, grow old and feeble, with hair whitened by the snows of many winters, yet, turn they ever to each other with all the fond affection of early youth, consulting each others wishes, and loving deeply, to the last. Ah, this is love, indeed!

Happy season of youth: bright dreams of boyhood, rain-bow tintings of hope, sound visionless sleep, careless heart, elasticity of limb, gay, wild, reckless spirit of joy, I ask, where are ye now? and echo answers, where?

Oh! youth, how in my wintery age, I recall thee! How my heart goes back to those blissful hours of youth and love, when all the future was bright, and with what fond remembrance do I dwell upon them; and yet I awake to find myself a desolate old man, wandering upon the shores of time, with the waves of eternity dashing at my feet, and all their gay picturing dissipated forever! Is it for this we live? Only to see our brightest hopes withered, our dearest ties broken, and the heart seared and blighted, craving the only rest it has hope left for: the cold, silent sleep of the dead!"

"And is there not, dear father, another land where you shall drink of the fountain of Eternal youth? Do you weary of waiting for the hour when you shall quench your thirst in that fountain, and rise a beautiful, glorified spirit, with the impress of endless youth upon your brow?"

"There is another land, my daughter, and there is,

too, a fountain of eternal youth; but when I see you, with your holy devotion, your spotless purity, and your many sufferings, I feel that you are, indeed, chosen for that world of glory, and I tremble lest I, an old sinner, who has often hardened his heart to the warning voice, and committed so many sins against God, will never reach that Heaven which will be your home, my spotless child."

"Say not so, dear father, for my heart, like your own, is wicked and prone to evil, and, alas, how often have I strayed from the path of duty. How often wandered from the God I love. But a hand of mercy has been extended to me, and I have been led back by the tenderest affection. Never, never, have I been forsaken. In the darkest hours of my life, when

> "Hope came back with worn and wounded wing
> To die upon the heart it could not cheer,"

and all around me was sorrow and dismay, and my heart failed me for fear, suddenly God stretched forth His hand and upheld me with a father's love. Oh, what do I not owe him! All the fond devotion of my soul, all its tenderest affection; aye, a thousand lives, if I had them, and even then I should still be a debtor to his boundless goodness. Do not then draw comparisons, and believe me more worthy of mercy than yourself. God judges not as man judges, and to him the secrets of all hearts are known. Confide in his grace and love, and do not believe these insuffi-

cient to open the gates of heaven to you. And then, to tell me that you are desolate! Dear father, is Marcia nothing to you, that you talk thus?"

She twined her arm about his neck, rested her pale face on his shoulder, and looked up. As she did so, with all a daughter's winning sweetness of manner, Mr. Woodville felt that he had not been sufficiently thankful to the God who had given him this blessing, even though he was to keep it but a short time; and as he drew her close to his manly heart, he offered up a prayer of gratitude that it had been his lot to meet with the Wanderer; to cover her pathway with flowers, and oft-times bring joy to the lonely heart.

Oh, ever in your wanderings along the way-side of life, if you meet with the sick, the desolate and forsaken, close not your heart to the tender emotions of pity, but share with the stranger, the blessings God has given to you; and then the Way-marks in the lines of the heart-broken, may be bright spots, dear to memory, and often the Wanderer's heart will turn to them with gratitude and prayers.

Octave and his happy bride came to the St. Charles hotel, and there spent the first few weeks of their married life. It was astonishing to see how naturally Octave transferred his affections to his bride. Indeed, no one could have helped loving her, she was so artless, so confiding, that she won her way at once to the heart. Little Flora flitted about, perfectly delighted with her new aunt, and the whole party seemed as

happy as they could well be. The weather was beautiful, and many little riding parties were made up, in which Marcia joined, and her friends almost began to hope that she would eventually recover.

One day, the waiter brought in a letter and handed it to Octave. It was from Mrs. Woodville, and ran thus.

PINE GROVE, Georgia, February, 18—.

My dear Son:

I received your letter of the 20th of January, and I must say the contents of it filled me with surprise. Do not understand me, that I find fault with your sending for Mrs. Walton. On the contrary, I heartily approve of the plan, but what amazes me is that Marcia has at last given her consent to marry you. What could have induced her to change her sentiments at this time, is to me an enigma I cannot solve. Possibly you can do so, when we meet. I do not wish you to think that I disapprove of your choice. Indeed, with all a mother's partiality on your side, I do not think you worthy of Marcia. She is so pure-hearted and sincere, so affectionate and winning, that I am ready to take her to my heart, as fondly as if she were my own child; but, my son, have you considered all the consequences of this step? How do you know but marriage may hasten the death of the poor girl? and, at the best, you must look forward to being a widower. Do you not think it would be bet-

ter never to disturb the pure current of a life so holy? Would not the blow come less heavily if you lost her before she became your wife? Think of all this, my son, and do not, for any selfish consideration, take one hour from the life of the sweet girl, who we all love so tenderly. Write me soon, and let me know your determination. In the meantime John shall be in readiness, and will go the moment you desire him.

Mr. Percy has grown to be the strangest, moodiest man you ever saw. He very often passes a whole day without eating, and if I inquire if he is sick, he answers so mournfully and hopelessly, that I cannot but pity him. I fear he has some secret sorrow preying on his mind. The other evening he was sitting with his head leaning on his hand, apparently in deep thought. Suddenly he asked me when you would return? I told him about the first of March. "I fear," said he, "it will be a strange bridal party. I should not wonder if your son was a widower ere then." The words, in themselves, were simple enough, but his lips were white and quivering, and his face expressed intense suffering. I asked him if he was ill? "Ill in mind, madam, but not in body," and taking up his candle he retired to his room, but not to rest, for I heard him walking up and down his chamber till long after midnight. Now, what can be the reason of all this? My son, can you explain it? It seems to me there is a mystery about it, which, of course, I should not desire to fathom for any purpose

but to assist him with my advice and warmest sympathies, for he is certainly a most excellent young man. Write me what you think, and above all hasten home as soon as you can. You have so spoiled your mother by staying with her so much, that home is no longer home without you.

The children join me in love to Marcia, brother Woodville and Flora. Take good care of the invalid, and above all do not urge anything upon her that she disapproves of. I have every confidence in her purity of thought, and clear unbiassed judgment.

Good bye till we meet, and believe me, always, your affectionate mother,

S. L. Woodville.

To account for this singular letter one has only to call to mind the postcript where Octave had stated he was going to be married, and could not leave Marcia long enough to go after Mrs. Walton. He had not even mentioned Mary's name in the letter, and hence arose the mistake, which was a natural one on the part of Mrs. Woodville.

Octave went at once to write an explanation to his mother, telling her that he was already married. Weeks glided by, and our party still lingered in Orleans, seeming to think that Marcia was better pleased there, than she would be to return to Georgia. They little knew her heart, poor girl. She went no more to the opera, or the soirees, but she rode out every

day a short distance. She never repined at her lot, but treated every body with the kindness and gentleness that seemed a part of her nature. She was keenly alive to the sufferings of others, and could never see a case of distress without making efforts to relieve it.

One day, as she rode along enjoying the fine balmy air on the New Shell road, she saw a poor woman sitting at the road side, weeping bitterly. She held in her arms an infant, and a small child sat beside her. They were clothed in rags, and their entire appearance betokened the most extreme misery. Marcia stopped the coachman, got out, and went to the poor woman. She listened to her sad story, which was the old one of the poor Irish emigrant. She had left her home to seek her fortune in the western world. Her husband had died on the passage out, and here she was, a widow, with her two helpless infants; a stranger, without one friend to aid her. Marcia, having heard her through, went, with tears in her eyes, to Mr. Woodville, who never refused his purse on such occasions. Having given the poor woman a considerable sum, she returned and took her seat in the carriage, and they continued their drive. Mr. Woodville said—

"I never like to refuse these people, and yet many of them are terrible impostors. New York, particularly, swarms with them. I remember one cold bitter night in January, I started with several friends from the Astor House to go to the Broadway Theatre.

We crossed Broadway, and as we were proceeding along by the Park, my attention was attracted by a miserably clothed creature, who walked in front of us, hugging to her breast a tiny baby, not more than a month old." "Poor creature," I exclaimed, "what a night to be abroad with an infant!"

"You are not up to their tricks," said one of my friends, " or you would not be so lavish of your pity."

"I think," said I, "her misery is obvious enough, and I am going to relieve it." Stepping up to her, I asked if she stood in need of any assistance. She told me a most pitiful tale; said her husband had beaten her and put her out into the street, with her young infant; that she had no money, and knew not where to go. At this moment my friends declaring that their patience was exhausted, told me they would go on to the Theatre and I might follow when I was ready. I called a carriage, helped the woman into it, and told the coachman to drive to a boarding house on Greenwich street, which I knew to be perfectly respectable, though rather plain. When we reached it I went in, and took a nice room for the poor creature, and paid two weeks board in advance. I gave her money to buy the child some clothes, for there was not enough upon it to keep it from freezing. As I turned to leave her she burst into tears, declaring that she would never forget my kindness. I told her not to speak of it—that I was only too happy to be

able to afford her any relief. I promised to call upon her in a few days and see how she was getting along. I left her and joined my friends in the theatre. They laughed heartily when I told them what I had done, and declared me to be as green as my native groves in Georgia. I bore their jests for awhile with perfect good humor, but at length declared against it, and the subject was dropped.

Business matters engrossed my attention for nearly a week, and although I often thought of the poor woman with the deepest sympathy, yet it was eight days before I called upon her. I asked the landlady how Mrs. Williams was, and if I could see her?

"Why, la," said she, "the creature said you wanted her to go to another place, and she left here the next morning, after I had given her back the money you paid me, only keeping enough to defray the expenses of the night's lodging."

"Is it possible," said I, "she could have been an impostor?"

"Indeed she must have been, sir."

I turned away, disgusted with human nature, and retraced my steps to Broadway. As I walked leisurely down, I met, on the corner of Franklin street, an old friend, who had long been a resident of New York. He linked his arm in mine, and we continued our promenade together.

"Surely," said I, "that is her?"

"Who?" said my friend. "Is it possible, Woodville, you are in pursuit of the fair sex?"

"Not exactly, but you see that woman, there. Ah, she sees me and colors. She is just turning down Chambers street."

"Has she been trumping up a story to move your sympathy?"

"I met her, the other night, with a young baby in her arms. She was wandering about the streets, and told me she had no home to go to. I took her to a house where I obtained boarding for her, and paid for it, in advance. The next morning, she got the money back from the landlady and decamped.

That is what you might have expected. She borrows the baby to move people's pity, begs all she can, and then, with a worthless husband, repairs to a tavern, gets intoxicated, and after exhausting all her means, starts forth again with her borrowed baby."

"Ah," said I, "I see; I see."

The story just told is strictly true, but do not let it close your heart to pity. All are not impostors, and from the plenty God has blessed you with, always strive to help and succor the poor and distressed.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mobile! Sweet city of the Sunny South! Among thy kindly people, the Wanderer found a warm welcome, and many friends. Few persons at a distance, would be likely to form a correct idea of the charms of this place. The society is excellent, and the people are enlightened and refined.

One lovely evening, our little party started out for a walk, and proceeded up Government street, which is the Broadway of the city. The street is very broad, and on either side of it are built the houses of the wealthiest inhabitants. Every house has a garden in front and at the sides, where, through the winter months, may be found flowers of every hue, blooming in the open air. Long rows of trees make the street a pleasant promenade at noonday, and in the evening, as our party walked beneath them, the silvery light of the moon played amid the branches, and threw fantastic shadows on all the surrounding objects. Let us listen, and hear what our friends' opinions are of Mobile. Marcia said,—

"What beautiful moonlight. Surely there is a softened brilliance in this light, never seen in our northern climate."

"It is not equal to Georgia moonlight," said Octave.

"Ah, you are prejudiced in favor of your native State," said Mary.

"With what fanciful figures those columns seem to be covered, and yet it is only the leaves of the trees reflected there," continued Marcia.

"You are quite romantic about moonlight, my child," remarked Mr. Woodville.

"Do you think, dear father, love for the moon and the beautiful stars, is romance?"

"I do not know that it ought to be considered so, and yet one is apt to condemn it, and connect it with the young and foolish portion of our life, when we view all nature though a false medium."

"It is not romance that makes me love them, father. It is because they are the work of God. He placed them high in heaven. He studded the azure vault, with diamond-like constellations, and I never look up at them, that I am not lost in wonder at the mighty power that formed the heavens and the earth."

"Did you ever choose a star, fair cousin, and call it your kindred spirit, and watch eagerly for it every night, as you would for the coming of an old familiar friend?"

"Yes, Octave, I have done so from early childhood. Doubtless you will think it childish, but sometimes when clouds have obscured it for several days, and then, at last, a clear evening would come, and it

would shine in my casement. I have wept tears of welcome at its appearance, and thrown kisses from the tips of my fingers to the beautiful star of my hopes."

"Marcia, dear, it will not be prudent to walk further in the night air. Shall we return?"

"Certainly, father, but there is Flora, nearly half a block ahead. You will have to call her back. There was a time when she could not have walked faster than I."

Our party returned to the house, and talked about making arrangements to leave for home the next day, but the arrival of a note put a stop to this proceeding, at least till the day after. It was an invitation, to the whole party, to visit a lady who lived a few miles out of Mobile on one of the most beautiful plantations in the State of Alabama.

At an early hour they set out and reached, just in time for dinner, the home of Mrs. Vandeventer. An elegant repast was prepared, and after dinner the visitors set out to walk through the lovely grounds belonging to the establishment. Visiting groves of orange trees, immense graperies and green-houses, filled with choice flowers, occupied the afternoon. Marcia was a great admirer of flowers, and she took a seat beneath the spreading branches of an orange tree, now forced by artificial means into full bloom. There was something in the delicious fragrance of these blossoms that stole over her senses and filled her with a sort of intoxicating happiness. I think fine perfumes have much the

same effect over one that exquisite music produces; and I have sometimes found persons to agree with me.

Having at length visited all the objects of interest, our party returned to the house, much pleased with all they had seen. It had been determined that they should remain a day longer, and visit a place called "the Ruins," about five miles further up the country. Now, for a description of our hostess.

Mrs. Vandeventer was a widow lady, middle aged, and still remarkably handsome. There were traces of sorrow on her face, which spoke plainly of the storms of earlier life, but now, a sweet smile mellowed all harsher lines, and it was evident that she was no longer unhappy. Two charming daughters and one son, made up the family, and they lived in an elegant house, and were surrounded by all the appliances of wealth and luxury.

In the society of this interesting family, the evening passed rapidly away, and at length our friends retired to rest. The next morning they started on their expedition to the romantic Ruins, and the curiosity of our little party was much excited by the promise of Mr. Woodville to relate to them a story connected with the possessors of the place now gone to decay.

Upon a slight elevation, and surrounded by a thick growth of tall trees, were the remains of what had once been a handsome residence. Tottering walls covered with moss, richly cut pillars, which had once

supported a handsome balcony, remnants of turrets fast crumbling into dust, and old sashless windows, told the sad story of departed hopes. Who shall tell of all the young, gay spirits, once living within these walls? How many bright, happy faces, had once looked forth from these windows, upon the rich scenery around! How many gladsome feet had passed lightly over the once well-kept gravel walks, now overgrown with weeds and tangled brush wood! And now, where are they? where are the merry voices that once echoed far and near? where are the graceful forms that peopled this solitude? Alas, if you will listen to Mr. Woodville, as our party proceed on their way to town, that evening, you will hear the story of the once rich and happy possessors of the Ruins.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Alas, they have pleaded, the friends that are round thee;
Alas, they have warned thee, entreated and wept;
They have shown thee the sin in the spell that hath bound thee,
And the serpent whose coils round thy spirit have crept."

* * * * * *

Marcia, I know you are impatient to hear me repeat the story I promised you this morning. Shall I begin now?

"Oh yes, father, do."

"Well, I will tell it you, but I warn Octave and Flora not to interrupt me with questions.

When I was a young man I knew intimately John Twickham, the owner and proprietor of the Woodlands, which was the name of the place you visited to-day. He was handsome, high-spirited, and the delight of all his young acquaintances. He was rich, and as both of his parents were dead, he was undisputed possessor of all their wealth. He spent his money freely, and his reckless habits soon drew around him a set of men who played upon his weaknesses, in order to advance their own interests. He loved wine, and soon acquired a taste for brandy, and while under the influence of the poisonous cup, he would play largely and lose immense sums. Every body said that Twickham was a fine fellow, but that he was going to ruin headlong, and you know what every body says must be true. It so happened in this case, however, that ruin was put off for an indefinite period of time by the advent of a new personage upon the scene. Emily Vincent was the only daughter of a clergyman who lived a few miles from the Woodlands. Her beautiful face, slender form, modest manners, and affectionate disposition, made a deep impression upon the mind of the gay Twickham. He offered her his hand, promising, if she accepted him, never again to touch the dangerous chalice, which he knew, though wreathed in flowers, to be laden with death. And the young, innocent creature trusting in

his plighted word, became his wife, and bade a last adieu to happiness. For a few months, it is true, he abstained from the frolicksome life he had led as a bachelor, and seemed to find in Emily all the amusement his heart pined for, but gradually he relapsed into his old habits, and long after midnight the loud laugh, and the rude jest, echoed from the spacious dining-room and pierced the hallowed precincts of his wife's chamber. She never repined, but always met him with a smile, and in the long years of sorrow that she passed, no one ever knew her to upbraid for one moment the husband who had so cruelly blighted her youth. A family of sons and daughters grew up around them, and in these Emily might have found comfort, but her husband, in spite of her entreaties and prayers, would insist upon learning the boys how to drink. He declared they would never be men till they had been completely intoxicated, and from childhood up they were placed at their father's side, and made to drink the health of all present in the lisping accents of infancy.

God knows what the poor wife suffered. He was with her, when through the long hours of the night she wept and entreated him to change her husband's heart, and poured forth to him the sorrows of her wounded breast. But there was one trouble which had as yet been spared her. She had never wanted for money, but had been plentifully supplied from the first day of her marriage. Now, however, her hus-

band's lavish expenditure had drained his coffers. Creditors would wait no longer, and an execution was served in the house, and all the furniture was sold. Previously the plantation had been mortgaged, and now house, home, and every thing were swept from them. In a fit of maddened phrensy he set fire to the house, and nearly every part of it was consumed before the flames could be extinguished. Poor Twickham was conveyed to prison, and died, while waiting his trial, of that terrible disease, mania-potu.

Emily, surrounded by her children, her father, long since dead, took refuge in a miserable cabin which had once served for a negro quarter. Here on the bare ground, the fair and lovely child of ease and luxury sat with her children in utter desolation. Many blamed her and said, "a good wife makes always a good husband;" others, more charitable, pitied her, but more seemed inclined to leave her to her fate.

A new voice now came to swell the chorus of suffering; another mouth presented itself to be fed. Months dragged on wearily, and one after another the children, reared in the lap of luxury, died of disease, of want and privation. None now remained but the desolate Emily, and her three youngest children.

One day, a lady who lived in Mobile, was taking a ride through the country, and it so happened that a violent storm of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, drove her to the poor cabin for shelter.

She had a heart to feel for the sorrows of others, and she was struck with the evident polish and refinement of manner of the gentle Emily. She longed to know by what circumstances one so lady-like had been reduced to her present abject condition, and yet she could not bring herself to ask any questions that might wound the delicacy of one who had already suffered so much.

After the storm had abated she returned to town, promising that she would come again and see her. True to her promise, she often visited our poor Emily, and one day they walked forth together to the graves of her lost children. And here was a tie to bind the rich lady forever to her poor friend, for a short distance off were laid also two of her own dear children in their last quiet sleep. Pride was thrown aside, reserve was forgotten, and the poor heart-broken Emily wept upon the bosom of the rich and elegant Mrs. S., and poured into her listening ear the history of her sorrows.

Emily Twickham no longer suffered for bread, no longer lived in the miserable cabin and wept in loneliness at her sad fate. In the elegant mansion of Mrs. S., she had found a home, a sister, and all the luxury to which she had been accustomed from her early youth. The roses of health bloomed again on her cheeks, and many friends and admirers surrounded her with their attentions. One elderly gentleman, possessed of immense wealth, formed an attachment

for the lovely widow, and asked her to marry him. Emily went to Mrs. S., and having obtained her opinion upon the subject, accepted the offer, and in a few months she was a second time a wife.

Some time after her marriage, her husband told her he had something to impart to her, which he had previously kept secret for reasons of his own. He said that when he was a young man, he had a perfect passion for strong drink, and spent all his wages in taverns. He declared that for two years he never once went to bed sober.

One evening he was returning home, as usual, intoxicated, when he passed an open door where a small number of friends had met together to hold prayer meeting. He paused and listened. For the first time in his life his eyes were opened to his own open disobedience of God's law. He entered the room and knelt down. He was deeply moved. At the close of the meeting he went away, but returned again the next night, and the next, and at length became thoroughly reformed. He joined the church, and had never touched liquor since.

Here was a case of perfect reform, and that man lived and died a Christian, and left his widow in easy circumstances, with her three children handsomely provided for.

"Now I know the reason, father, that Mrs. Vandewenter would not join our party to-day to the ruins."

"What was it, daughter?"

"She thought it would revive unpleasant recollections; scenes which she would far rather forget."

"What in the world are you aiming at, Marcia?" asked Octave.

"I can tell what Marcia thinks," interposed Mary. "She believes—"

"That Mrs. Vandewenter and Emily are the same person," said Flora.

"Are you all witches or fairies," asked Mr. Woodville, "that you should so easily arrive at the truth?"

"Oh no, uncle," said Flora, "we are only good guessers."

"Here we are at home already. Well, that seemed like a short ride. We will take supper and retire early, for we shall leave to-morrow morning for home."

"Dear uncle, I am so glad to hear you say so. I am so anxious to see little Laurie, and Gregory, and Albert, and grandma, and all the folks."

"And is my sweet Marcia glad?" asked Mr. Woodville.

"Perhaps I should be more so, were my dear mother and brother there awaiting my arrival."

"That is but natural, my child, but you must try to be happy with us, and forget them."

"Forget them! Ah, I never can do that."

CHAPTER XV.

"Come back, oh come! The past shall be
A cloud fore'er removed;
Come back, and in my welcome see
How thou art still beloved."

Far away, over many weary miles of distance, to the great metropolis of the United States; to the fashionable and far-famed Saratoga; to the great and tremendous Niagara; to Cincinnati, St. Louis, New Orleans, and Mobile, we have wandered side by side with the pale heroine of our story. We have listened to her artless conversation, and have possessed ourselves of her secret thoughts and imaginings. We have not hesitated to follow her into her chamber, and watch over her through her weary sickness. Tell me if she has now your heart? Tell me if you would not be better pleased that a better fate awaited her? Have her sorrows awakened in your breast emotions of pity? For her sake will you deal mercifully with the desolate ones you may chance to meet in your daily walks? If so, I have not in vain repeated to you the Way-marks I found marked down in the life of the Wanderer.

Arrived at her journey's end, Marcia found a glad surprise awaiting her, afforded by the presence of her

mother and tenderly-loved brother. Mrs. Walton subdued her emotions as she gazed at her wasted child, but little Benny could not control or hide his sorrow. "Dear sister," he said, "what makes you look so pale? They tell me you are going to die. Oh do not die and leave me, sister, I would miss you so much."

"Do not weep, darling, when I tell you I must die. 'Tis true I shall leave you, but only for a little while. You know that heaven is a bright and glorious place. Are you sorry that it is my home?"

"Ah no, I am glad of that, but I cannot bear you to leave me. Are you not my only sister? Who will love me when you are gone?"

"Mother will, dear brother, and you must try to be a comfort to her declining years when I am taken away. When you grow up will you not work hard, and earn money, and give it to her to buy every thing she wants?"

"Oh yes, indeed I will. Poor mother, she will only have me then to love her."

"That is all, and you must not add to her sorrows by mourning after me. Try to remember that it is God who has done it, and he does all things for the best."

"Why is it best that you should die, sweet sister?"

"Such things are hidden from our eyes, and we have no right to question God. He is beneficent and good, and studies our eternal happiness when he

removes us from earth. At first I thought it was very hard to leave my dear mother, and you, my little darling. I wept many bitter tears at my hard fate. I wanted to work for, and take care of my dear mother, and to send you to school and educate you. But tears will not avail to change my lot. I know that I must die, and I pray God daily to give me strength to obey his mandates, and bow to his will, let it seem ever so hard."

Octave broke in on this conversation, by asking Marcia if she would see Harry Percy. He was waiting without, he said, and was anxious to see her. Marcia signified her assent, and Octave left the room and returned in a few moments with Harry Percy.

The human eye never rested upon a more perfect form than that of Harry Percy. Tall, erect, and dignified, he stood before our heroine, and inquired after her health in tones that thrilled to her heart. At last he took a seat beside her, and led her on to talk of her travels, the curiosities she had seen, and the various people she had met. Mr. Woodville, Mrs. Woodville, senior and junior, Octave, and the children, all joined in the conversation, and the evening passed pleasantly away.

Little Laurestina introduced upon the scene a new character not before brought into notice. It was a kitten, which was her constant companion, and which amused all present by its innocent gambols. It seemed particularly to fancy the toe of Marcia's shoe,

and ran round it in evident delight, biting at it, and rolling over her foot. Laurestina watched it with an air of childish pride, and when she saw Marcia laughing at it, she ventured close up to her, and whispered in her ear,—

"It is my cat. Aint it pretty? It sleeps with me every night."

"Does it? Pray tell me what is its name?"

"I named it Marcia, after you."

"I feel quite pleased that you honored me so much. Does it eat any thing?"

"Oh yes, it eats milk. I give it as much as it wants every time we eat our meals. I feed it out of my little saucer."

I shall have to make it a present to testify my pleasure at having it named after me. Come to my room to-morrow morning, and I will give you a blue ribbon for its neck."

Laurestina skipped away to bed, with her cat in her arms, telling it as she went how good and kind Marcia was, and what a beautiful present she was going to make it to-morrow. Pussy listened attentively, but I am not able to state whether the emotions which kept her silent were those of gratitude or remorse, for she had, inadvertently I dare say, scratched Marcia's foot when playing with her.

The days passed pleasantly away, and but one sorrow now lingered at the fire side of the Woodvilles, and that was Marcia's still failing health. Every

thing that could tend to divert her mind and amuse her, was cheerfully performed; but alas, they felt it was hoping against hope to believe she would ever recover. It seemed as though Mr. Woodville, in adopting her as his daughter, had walked naturally into all the affection and devotion of a father, and he never wearied of amusing her and waiting upon her.

One day the family all rode out, to pay some visits to neighbors and friends who had called upon Mary to make her the usual calls of ceremony. Marcia was no longer equal to the fatigue of riding, and Harry Percy voluntered his services to remain with her and wait upon her. Mrs. Walton was in her room with a sick headache, and little Benny accompanied our friends upon their ride.

For the first time Marcia was left alone with Harry Percy, and what, you may ask, has that to do with the story? If you will listen to their conversation, perhaps you will be able to judge for yourself.

For a long time Harry sat perfectly silent, watching the lights and shadows as they played over the sweet face of the invalid.

Suddenly he sent Susan away, upon some slight pretext, and said—

"Miss Walton, do you fear to die?"

"Oh, no."

"Is there nothing on earth you cling to? Nothing that makes life dear, and death dreadful?"

"It is long since I permitted the things of time to enchain my affections. I have fixed them above."

"Miss Walton, pray pardon me, and do not think it impertinence that prompts me to ask you a simple question. Will you?"

"Certainly not."

"You know I am a plain man. That I am thought to be a hater of womankind, &c., but you know I am sincere at least. Now tell me frankly if you have ever loved?"

A burning blush suffused the pale pace of the invalid for a moment, that then receded and left it paler than before. She replied calmly,—

"I know not why you question me thus, neither do I recognise any right by which you should seek to fathom my secrets."

"Oh I have a right, Miss Walton. A right you would acknowledge if you knew all. Now tell me frankly, did not Miss Staunton, your school teacher, ever mention to you the existence of a certain person who watched you every Sunday in church, who followed you like a shadow, who loved you, and yet dared not, on account of his poverty, make known his love to you? Have you never thought you should like to behold the person who for four long years has lived but in the hope of possessing you? Has that person no right to ask you if you ever loved?"

"What strange thing is this?" exclaimed Marcia, starting up. "Is it possible that I behold"—

"The lover who followed you from New York to Georgia. Who, hearing that you were ill, flew to be

your comfort and protection, but who fancied upon his arrival he saw in you the future bride of the rich Octave Woodville."

"Oh, Harry Percy, what strange spell attracted me to you at the first? Alas, it is all explained now. In the first dawning of your smile upon my heart, I loved you. I know not why it is, but yet in all my wanderings your image has been constantly before me. I blushed to own to myself that this sudden feeling had taken possession of my heart. I strove to banish it; and when I heard the minister preach the ever to be remembered sermon on secret faults, I felt that the earthly sin that existed in my breast, was love for you, and I prayed God to give me strength to banish it."

"Do I indeed hear these sweet words from your lips, my own Marcia? Nay, do not strive to banish love. Who knows all its mighty power? You may be saved. You may live to be the joy of my heart, and the past will then seem to us but the dim remembrances of an unpleasant dream. Look up, sweet love. You are too young, too beautiful to die. Nay, vail not those brilliant eyes. Let me read in them the affection which blesses my lonely heart. What, weeping; and now, at this moment when I am so happy? So happy in the thought that Marcia is here beside me, and that I possess the warm devoted love of her guileless spirit."

"Why did you tell me all this? Oh, Harry, was it kind to wish to unnerve me? Do you not know that

it is worse than vain to hope I can recover? Oh, do not seek to make another tie between me and earth. It was a struggle, ah, such a struggle, to give up all, and now I am weaker than I was then; it breaks my heart to see my mother's sorrow, my brother's tears. The love and attention of my father and all my friends, are so many things to attach me to life; and now this last, greater than all else beside, my dream of hope, my vision of happiness, love of my soul, I must tear thee from me. Duty bids me give my heart to God. I thought I had long since done so, but I awake to find that I have deceived myself; for, dear, dear Harry, with all the ardent devotion of woman I have loved you, only you."

Forgetful of all save his love, Harry knelt beside the sofa, laid her beautiful head, with its mass of auburn curls, upon his shoulder, and passed his arm around her delicate form. He gazed upon the sweet, pale face, and yielding to an impulse he could not restrain, pressed upon her cheek and brow the first warm kisses of love.

Do not blame him: who that has felt as he did would have done otherwise. He might have said with truth, in loving and losing her,

—— "The world is crumbled at my feet!
She was my world; filled up the whole of being—
Smiled in the sunshine—walked the glorious earth—
Sat in my heart—was the sweet life of life.
The past was her's; I dreamt not of a future
That did not wear her shape!"

For an hour more the lovers sat, breathing those sweet vows of tenderness and devotion which, alas, were so useless, and yet which seemed to them the perfection of human happiness. Would that I could describe to you how charmingly beautiful they looked as they sat there, upon the entrance of the family party. Harry, with his hair thrown back, the light of love beaming in his eyes, the tender smiles of devoted affection on his lips; and Marcia, usually so pale and wax-like, but now bright, radiant and rosy, with the happiness of acknowledged love.

"Why, my sweet girl, Harry has proved an excellent nurse. We must often call upon him," said Mr. Woodville.

"I shall be willing always to obey the summons, that is if Miss Walton will permit me."

Miss Walton did not appear to notice Harry's remark, however. She was playing with the kitten that bore her name, and still sported the blue ribbon, which had been her gift.

The first wild emotions of her heart, at finding herself beloved by the only man who had awakened an interest in her breast, precluded all thought, or calm, sober reason. But left to herself, in the quiet of her chamber, she reviewed her feelings and actions during the past day, and bitterly accused herself of having strayed away from the path of duty. She went to her mother, and hiding her face in her bosom, told

her all that had passed, and asked if she did not think she had acted wickedly.

"I cannot blame you, my daughter, for any thing you have said or done, for it seems to me as if God permitted you this one star of hope to shine on your lonely pathway. No one could be more worthy of your hand and heart, if you should live to bestow them, and I do not see that your affection for him who has so fondly loved you, need interfere with your duty to God."

"And you will not chide me, if day by day he sits beside, and reads to me, and talks to me, and tells me of the bright future he had hoped was ours? Shall I listen to the musical tones of his voice, read in his beautiful eyes his tender love for me, and dream of the happiness that might have been mine, had not death stood in the way?"

"You can do all this, if you will but promise not to repine, but to believe that God knows what is best for you in removing you from earth. Be happy in this love, in the hope that in another and a better world the friendship began here shall be perfected."

"But, I fear I shall not be submissive. Ah, mother, my heart is throbbing wildly at the thought of what a happy life I might have led. It seems to me I should at least like to try the realities of the love Harry has offered me. It is this that makes me fear I am farther off from heaven than ever. I will pray to God to direct me, for strange hopes of life are within me, and

I am no longer the calm, resigned Christian, waiting for the hour when I shall be called home."

Long and fervently she prayed, and she rose from her knees with the traces of tears upon her cheeks, but the calm peace of God was on her brow, and the struggle was past.

How well she might have said with the exquisite poetess—

"Had we but met in life's delicious spring,
When young romance made Eden of the world;
When bird-like Hope was ever on the wing,
In thy dear breast how soon had it been furled.

Ah, had we then but met!—I dare not listen
To the wild whispers of my fancy now!
My full heart beats—my sad drooped lashes glisten—
I hear the music of thy *boy-hood's* vow."

CHAPTER XVI.

"Mistake me not; nor let one shadow fall
Upon thy heart, already worn with pain;
Let me but love thee, serve thee; this is all;
Grant me but this, and I am blessed again;
Blessed—for to love thee; though thou art not mine,
Is to my homeless heart an altar and a shrine."

Do you think that my story is sad, and do you dread to approach that last sad hour which shall close

the eyes of the Wanderer? Methinks it was the most beautiful period of her existence, and had it not been for her terrible fits of shortness of breath, she might have been said to suffer but little. Ah, how she pleaded at those moments of agony for God to release her from the frail tenement subject to so many ills.

But these dark hours were few, and soon forgotten in the dear presence of him who ever lingered near her, and read to her all the choice gems of poetry and prose, which many years of study had enabled him to collect. He unvailed to her the riches and beauty of a highly cultivated mind, and Marcia felt how worthy he was of her affection.

In the still hour of twilight, just as the stars came forth and shone in heaven, Harry always sat beside her, and holding her hand in his, conversed fondly of his past love and present happiness. Alas, he dared not speak of the future.

"Dear Harry, do you believe the angels look down upon us, and know our thoughts and wishes, and hear our conversation?"

"I know not how that is, but I should suppose it very possible. Often in the dreams of my father, which have visited my pillow since his death, I have seen him, and conversed with him as naturally as I ever did during his life."

"And yet, does it not seem to you that the freed spirit, leaving behind its imperfections and sorrows, should soar away to the presence of God, and forget

all that could give it pain? Is it likely to suppose the dear ones we have loved, and who are now in heaven, are still agitated by the emotions of humanity?"

"If heaven be a place of perfect happiness and enjoyment, I should think it unlikely that sorrow or pain could influence its angels. And yet, does it not seem hard that all the tender ties that unite us here, should be rudely snapped asunder—that all the fond devoted love of a life time, should in a moment be forgotten?"

"Let us not believe that love and affection cease, dear Harry. You may if you choose deny the existence of sorrow in that land of peace, but it is not necessary to exclude all the holier and happier emotions of life. God is love. He is filled with love to all his creatures. He studies their happiness, and doubtless all the bright spots in their checkered existence, are spared to them when they reach his presence. Oh, Harry, I hope it may be so, for I could not bear to die forgetting all I love on earth. No, no, I shall hope to know, and love them all in heaven, far from the sorrows which cloud my happiness here; but if, dear Harry, I can leave that bright world to which I go, if I know that you are lonely and sad, and mourn my absence, be assured my spirit will fly on the wings of love to cheer you in your loneliness. I will hover around you when the storms of sorrow roll over your soul, and speak words of

peace and comfort in your ear. I will tell you sweet tales of that happy clime where sin never enters; where sorrow is unknown?"

"Nay, tell me no more, dear girl, or I shall end by wishing that you may come back, and that will not be resignation to the will of God. I know that I must lose you, and my only happiness now, is sitting in your presence, and listening to the dear voice which so soon will be hushed. I dare not trust myself to dwell upon the future, for life seems so lonely without you. But now that you have promised to come back to me, if it be possible, who shall tell but that you may come and smile upon me as of old? The belief in guardian angels is so pure and holy, that I chide myself for doubting it."

"Harry, I have something on my mind which for some time past I have been going to ask you. Will you listen to me, now?"

"Do I not listen to you always, sweet girl?"

"I know not, but I should suppose you would often weary of my childish talk. I want to ask you if you will love little Benny, when I am gone? It was the dearest wish of my heart to educate him, and shield him from all the hardships of the rude world; and you know he is so tender and delicate."

"I will be all to him you can wish. Trust him to me. You know not how honored I shall feel by the confidence thus reposed in me. I will be father, brother and friend to him as long as I live. I will

lavish upon him the affection and tenderness which now belong to you."

"Spoken like yourself, dear Harry; but suppose when he is growing up he seems to be wayward and disobedient, and repays you with ingratitude for all your love and kindness—say, will you turn against him then, and pronounce him utterly worthless, and regret the day you undertook his protection?"

"Never, never. I will remember that he is but mortal, and knowing my own infirmities I shall be better able to palliate his. Let him be ever so wicked, I declare to you I will never turn against him, or withdraw my affection and counsels. In him I will cherish the dear remembrance of you, my first and only love. Do you think I can ever treat with harshness, one who has your blood running in his veins? Ah, no. He shall fill the vacant place in my heart. I must needs have something to love and protect, and my heart warms to your baby brother. Poor boy, he has never seen a father's smile or heard his blessing. God has given him no brother to love and protect him, but I will be father and brother, and never will I forget the sacred charge you, my sweet love, committed to me."

"One has only to hear you say so to believe it. Nobody that hears you speak, could for a moment doubt your word, for there is the impress of a spotless soul upon your brow, and I can read truth in every lineament of your face. I trust you will impart to

Benny the same beautiful reverence for truth that influences you. I think it one of the noblest traits of character a human being can possess."

"It certainly is. Nothing in my estimation can be more contemptible than a person who, dead to all the loveliness of spotless integrity, thinks nothing of asserting that which he knows to be false. You cannot respect a person if you are not able to depend upon his word."

"Certainly not, and I think that this one point gained, all other virtues follow in train. I remember hearing a minister once discoursing upon this subject, and he made use of the following beautiful words. 'What,' said he, 'would you destroy the temple of truth? Then take down the stars, shroud the sun, let the moon be hidden from our sight.' But see, it grows quite dark. Are not the family returning from their walk?"

"I think I see the flutter of the children's light dresses, up the avenue. I will go out and listen, and try if I can hear them. Yes, they are coming, and laughing merrily, too."

"Oh! how I long to go forth and inhale the fresh, pure air of heaven, and feel strong and well again. But that can never be again on earth; and my spirit yearns to be free, to soar far away from this vale of tears, and to put on that glorious body which shall be exempt from all infirmity."

"Well, my sweet child," said Mrs. Walton, enter-

ing with the whole family party who had been taking a walk, "have you missed us much?"

"Very little, for you know, dear mother, that had I been left alone, my thoughts are not unpleasant companions at the twilight hour."

"I don't like to be left alone for a moment," said Octave.

"You are such a coward, I suppose you are afraid in the dark?" said Mary.

"Certainly, that is it, and I look to you for protection."

"You depend then upon a broken reed."

"He is a brave young man, at all events," said John Woodville, with a merry laugh. "He would not ride over to Carrol's with me the other night, and why, do you suppose? He was afraid of the runaway negroes hiding in the woods. I have seen the time he'd brave an army of fugitive slaves, but alas! that day is past, and it remains for me to uphold the honor of the Woodvilles."

"A pretty looking fellow you are, to be sure," said Mr. Woodville.

"Don't make fun of John," interposed Mrs. Woodville. "He thinks himself quite a man, I assure you."

"Never mind what they say, John," said Mary. "Our new house will be finished this week, and a certain little Kate will be there on a visit, next week; and you know we shall always have room at our house for you."

"I have no doubt Miss Kate will shorten her visit if she hears I am coming."

"Surely, that would be nothing strange," remarked Octave.

"'Pon my word, you are too hard upon John; I protest against it," exclaimed Mr. Woodville.

"What did you say, Flora?"

"Laurestina said her cat had eyes just the color of mine, and I say it is no such thing."

"I thought pussy's eyes shaded on the green."

"So they do, uncle."

"Well, I don't think yours do. Laurie, what are you trying to make the kitten do?"

"I am only teaching it to give me its paw, and shake hands with me, like Willie Hinchman's dog."

"I think you may spare yourself the trouble, for as a general thing pussy adheres to the beaten track, and scorns all innovations, and I do not remember to have heard shaking hands classed in the list of her accomplishments. Marcia, what strange thing is little Benny repeating to you?"

"Only telling me of a monstrous big bug he picked off mother's frock; and about a crowd of cats he saw in the woods; which crowd, upon strict inquiry, turned out to be merely two."

"That is the way that children begin to tell stories, my son," said Mrs. Walton. "I do not know why it is that you have such a disposition to exaggerate.

Would it not have sounded equally well had you said two cats, at first?"

"I suppose it would," answered Benny.

"Another time, then, remember to tell nothing but the truth. It is much more noble in a child to tell a straight unvarnished fact. Embellish falsehood as you will, still it is falsehood, and every body shrinks away from you, and whispers that your word is not to be taken. Seek rather to establish a character for truth, and when you speak you will be listened to attentively. You will be respected wherever you are known, and many persons will seek to make you their friend."

"Please scold me some, too," said Laurestina. "I tell a great many stories, and mother says, she believes it is more natural for me to tell falsehood than truth; and I really believe she is right, for when I do wrong, my first thought is, what shall I say to hide it, and my next is, mother told me always to confess, and I should not be punished if I spoke the whole truth fearlessly and boldly. So you see I am quite as wicked as poor little Benny."

Benny stood with his large blue eyes fixed in an earnest gaze upon his mother. He was ashamed to have been reprimanded in the presence of others, and yet there was that in the child's spirit that made him hide what he felt. His little heart swelled within him, but he repressed his tears, and no one would have

supposed, who glanced casually at his face, how deeply he was mortified.

But Marcia knew his feelings. In her own childhood she recalled scenes like the present, when pride had restrained all the gentler emotions of her heart. She well remembered how she had been called hardened, when in reality her heart was bursting with sorrow and shame; and she gently stole her arm round his waist, and drew his little golden head down to her face, and whispered in his ear—

"You will never tell stories again, will you, dear Benny? I know you are sorry now, and wish you had not done so. When sister dies, and you see her laid in the grave, will you not think that she wept and prayed for you when she knew you had told a falsehood and displeased God?"

Little Benny burst into tears, and he promised never to tell another story; and I think from that time to the present he has never forgotten his sister's affectionate reproof.

CHAPTER XVII.

"I would not die in Spring time,
When all is bright around,
And fair young flowers are peeping,
From out the silent ground;
When life is on the water,
And joy upon the shore;
For Winter, gloomy Winter,
Then reigns o'er us no more."

Spring, lovely, beautiful spring, was abroad. The trees were covered with their young, bright livery of green. The peach and apple trees were thick with blossoms. The woods were over-grown with wild flowers and herbage, and the birds caroled forth their hymns of gratitude and adoration to the Creator. Well might one believe, while wandering beneath the cloudless skies of Georgia, inhaling the soft pure air, and enjoying the rich scenery around them, that earth was indeed a Paradise till Sin entered, and planted within every lovely flower a thorn.

Oh, why was it, most Omniscient and Omnipotent God, that thou didst permit the serpent to tempt our mother Eve? How beautiful is the home thou hast given us. How blessed and happy might we have been, if thou hadst ordained, in thine Infinite wisdom, that the Evil one should have no power over man.

Thou didst know our weakness. Oh, why was it placed in our power to sin? I never yet committed a sin that I did not repent of the next moment; and yet upon occasion I sinned again, and again sought pardon for the offence.

My mother leans over me as I write. "What," she exclaims, "is it possible that the child of so many prayers; the child whose mind I strove so hard to fill with the divine truths contained in the Bible, thus repays my love?—thus questions the Supreme Wisdom of God?"

"Pardon me, mother. I do not doubt God's Wisdom or his goodness, but I cannot understand why Sin was permitted to come into so beautiful a world, and sow the seeds of all horrible crimes, diseases and death. Think how fair and lovely is the face of Nature. Think what perfect happiness might have been our lot. What boundless, illimitable love might have united the whole human family in one unbroken circle. But I will not question the goodness of that God you have taught me to adore. In another world I shall know what my finite mind is incapable of appreciating here."

Let us return to the beautiful Spring, from which I wandered; the season emblematical of the gay visions of youth, when the future seems to contain so much of joy, and when the heart trusts to the friendships of life, and is unsuspicious of evil. Was it not hard for our sweet heroine, calmly to contemplate death amid

the gentle breathings of the spring? The soft air kissed her cheek, the sweet flowers "smiled in the sunshine," and clustering roses grew over her casement, and spread through her chamber delicious perfume. The sweet warbling of birds filled her ears with melody, and woke within her heart wild yearnings for the happiness which seemed to be the burden of their songs.

Such were the beauties of the day, but those of the night were still more dear to her lonely heart. The calm, quiet stars, shining upon her like the eyes of angels, the deep blue of that heaven which vailed her from the mysteries beyond, and the soft bright moon that filled her chamber with its holy radiance, and rested on her brow like the glory on that of the Madonna; these, all these she loved, and she wept at the thought of closing her eyes upon them forever.

One evening she sat, or rather reclined upon her couch, and gazed through the clustering vine leaves, at the starry night without. That day Octave and Mary had gone to their new home, about five miles distant, and the perfect happiness and brightness of their hope and expectations, all crowned with such full success, made in the mind of poor Marcia a sad contrast. Why was it that she, who had never wronged a human creature, whose only hope in living was to be a comfort and joy to others, must be cut off now, in the early spring-time of life? Why could she not live, and bring happiness and comfort to the

hearts of her mother and brother? Why could she not be a world of blessings to him who loved her so tenderly; whose existence without her seemed a blank?

She clasped her hands upon her brow, and the tears fell through her pale, wasted fingers, and dropped upon the snowy pillow. Her mother watched her for a few moments in silence, and then, gently bending over her, she asked—

"Why do you weep, my sweet child? Tell your mother what sadness fills your heart? What oppresses your breast, and wrings from you these silent tears?"

"Oh! mother, it is so hard to die."

"I know it dear one, yet it is the will of God."

"Yes, mother, but do not chide me for repining. Is it not natural that I should do so. To die so young, so much in life to make me happy; so many blessings, my dear, kind father, you, my sweet, gentle, beautiful mother; my darling brother, and—and—dear—dear Harry, who loves me so tenderly; who I love in return with all the wild, passionate devotion of my sex. Oh, mother, mother, do not blame me, but it is harder to leave him, than all beside. To bid him farewell; to tear from my heart the sweet memories of his love; to feel that we must part; we who love so tenderly, so devotedly, with the first and only affection that our virgin hearts have ever known; oh, mother, I cannot be calm and think of it. Go forth mother, dear, and bring Harry here. Let me weep

myself to sleep upon his bosom. Let me lay my poor, weak head upon his manly breast, and feel the fond beatings of his noble heart. I am not his wife, but surely in my last hours of waning life, it will be no sin, no shame to lie upon his breast, and die within the folds of his caressing arms."

"Surely not, my daughter. I will call him, and I doubt not he will gladly obey the summons."

"My own, sweet love, did you send for me? I was reading in my own room, not daring to intrude upon the privacy of your chamber. I am here at your mother's bidding."

"Dear Harry, how kind of you to come. Sit down beside me. Hold me in your arms. Let me clasp my arms about your neck. Let me weep myself to rest, closely nestled to your heart."

"Nay, do not weep, sweet love. Look up, and be happy. See how beautifully the moon plays about your face. See how it rests upon your mother, as she sits there in her snowy drapery. Is it not an earnest of future happiness? Will not the present night of sorrow be followed by a glorious morning? This is the beautiful season of spring. The time for hope and joy. Nay, believe me, you will be spared till the lovely spring has passed away."

"Do not hope it, dear, dear Harry. Do not so sweetly whisper what can never be. Ah, no! the flowers of this very spring shall bloom over my grave. It is sad to die when all the world is so beautiful. It

is sad to leave you, my own, dear love. Teach me how to bear patiently my fate. Teach me how to trust more faithfully, more devotedly in God. Never, never did I stand more in need of your counsels and advice. My soul shrinks with cowardly fear, as I feel myself drawing nearer to the cold waters of the ocean of Eternity. Oh, Harry! shield me with your strong arm from the scythe of the Reaper, whose name is Death."

"Calm yourself, dear girl. Call in the powers of your own strong mind to aid you, for alas! I have no power here. Trust in God. He will sustain you. Oh! I know it is dreadful for you to contemplate your fate; but, dearest, do not shrink from what you cannot avoid. You must die. Fearful words, because irrevocable; but do not fear them. Sooner or later we all must die. What matters it that you are removed a short time before us? Life at the best is a checkered scene, where the dark features of the picture are most prominent. Look around you at those who seem to you so happy and contented. Ah! believe me, if you could read their hearts you would find they all had a crook in the lot, or a skeleton in the house. We will go with you to the entrance of the valley of the shadow of Death. We will comfort your weary heart with all the solaces of affection; for dearly, dearly are you loved by all, my own, sweet Marcia; but turn your heart in its wretchedness to God. Only God can aid you. Only God can support

you in that trying hour which makes cowards of the stoutest hearts. Weak indeed are the friendships of life at such a moment. You have no sins to bar your entrance to heaven; or, if you have, it can only be in loving me too much, and God will forgive you that, and bear you tenderly in his bosom, through the cold waters of death."

"Mother, dear, pray for your daughter. Harry says truly, I have loved him too much. Oh! pray for me that God may have mercy on me, and teach me how to look calmly in the face, the fierce struggle through which my soul must pass."

The sad mother knelt beside her child, and offered up her fervent prayers in a broken and faltering voice. Little Benny awoke, and creeping from his bed, knelt by his mother and joined his childish tears and prayers to hers. Surely the aspirations of that widow's heart went up as a memorial to the God of Heaven. Surely the Father of mercies pitied the fatherless child, who wept at sorrows he could not understand. And surely he would stretch forth his hand to the Wanderer, who after a short but troubled journey through the pathway of life, was called to give up all her heart held dear on earth, and try the dark realities of Eternity.

The prayer was answered, and peace came to the Wanderer's heart. Light as from Heaven fell upon her pale face, and she lay, calm, quiet and resigned to the will of God.

Who will say there is no mighty power in prayer? God has wisely ordered that we should seek at a throne of grace for all the blessings that we need. His ear is ever open to the sincere petitions of his children, and if he withhold a blessing that we crave, it is for our own good. We, poor, weak, short-sighted mortals that we are, but too often ask for that, which if granted, would but turn to gall and wormwood in our possession.

It is the duty of the Christian to ask what to pray for. 'Lord, teach me how to pray.' It is very hard for us to bid farewell to those we love: to close their eyes in death. It is hard for the mother to part from her child: to lay it in the cold ground, water the grave with her tears, and go back herself to life, lonely and desolate. It is hard to meet the contumely of the world, while the heart breaks in silent anguish within.

It is hard to find cruelty, reproaches and insult, where the heart has lavished its wealth of affection and confiding love. It is hard to trust in the bosom of a sworn friend, who in return betrays and deceives you; but do not repine. Do not ask God to change it. Ask him to remove your affections from earth and center them in Heaven. To give you a heart to love and fear him. To give you submission to all that he directs.

Are you a wife, whose happiness is centered in your husband? Are you a mother, whose hopes cluster round the dear ones that encircle your fireside? Are you a

sad, lonely one, that trusts in the friendship of man for support and comfort? Are you a fair, young girl, betrothed to him you trust and love? Ah! believe me, if you are either one or all of these, you will find your dream of happiness rudely broken: you will be taught to look for a husband that can never forsake you, children that are angels in heaven, and cannot die, friends beyond all the weakness and frailty of humanity, and lovers only in that God and Savior who will never betray your love and confidence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I am resigned. What'er my fate may be,—
In storms or sunshine to thy will I bow;
And be the fruit that hangs on life's green tree,
Or sweet or bitter, it is welcome now.
All things are equal to the heart that bears
A faith unblenching through earth's thousand cares."

Toward the close of a lovely day, a carriage wound its way along the hilly road that led from the town of D. to the plantation of Mrs. Woodville. Its occupants were two persons, a gentleman and lady. A fat Irish coachman sat on the box, and lazily told his horses to "get up," fifty times in an hour. Poor beasts, they looked as if they had not spirit enough left in them to breathe.

"I am afraid we shall not reach there before night," said the lady.

"It will not matter much, for there is a moon to-night," answered the gentleman.

"A moon to-night, is there? And pray what time do you suppose the moon rises, Mr. Wiseacre?"

"I should think about seven o'clock."

"Well, that shows how much you know about it, to be sure. The moon will not rise to-night till nine o'clock, and we shall surely be there before then."

"I hope so, indeed."

"Hope so; and I should like to know what there is to prevent it. How far do we have to go yet?"

"Some four miles."

"Some four miles," said the lady, who seemed determined to echo all her companion gave utterance to, and equally bent upon contradicting every assertion he made. "Some four miles, indeed. On the contrary, it is not more than two miles. Now ask the coachman, and see if I am not right."

The gentleman very obediently did as he was directed. The coachman said the distance was three miles and a quarter.

"There," said the lady, "did I not tell you so? You always think you know better than me. Some of these days I hope you will find out how little you know, and how much better it is always to trust entirely to me."

"I thought you said you believed the distance to be two miles," said the persecuted gentleman.

"And I should like to know what business you have to think? You thought, did you? Well, another time I will thank you not to think any thing about it. Pray leave the thinking to me."

"Yes, dear," meekly replied the poor man.

"I should like to know who it was that first thought of coming to see Marcia? I suppose you will be taking the credit of that to yourself?"

"I believe I mentioned it, dear."

"You believe you mentioned it, do you? Perhaps you did, but I know very well who thought of it first. Had it not been for my untiring energy, I should never have got you off. Oh, you ungrateful man. You will never be sufficiently thankful for the wife God has given you, till you lose her."

"When will that be, my dear?"

"When will it be, aye? Not for a long time yet, I can tell you, Mr. Johnson. So if you have been building up schemes, and thinking who you will have for a second wife, I can just inform you they will crumble into dust, for my family are remarkably long lived. Do you hear that?"

Husband, aside, "Alas! alas!"

"What is that you are grumbling about, you cross-grained, ill-natured, hard-hearted old tyrant, you?"

"My dear, what did you marry me for? You

seemed to be aware of all my faults before you asked me to have you."

"I asked you to have me? Oh, you dreadful, terrible man. How can you shock the delicate sensibility of a young wife in that horrible manner? I shall die, I know I shall die."

"Pray do, dear?"

"What do you say?"

"Nothing love, only you know you told me you were growing old, and the duties of your school were so arduous that you thought you could not stand them much longer. And then some of the children wounded your sensibility by calling you an old maid, and"—

"What?" screamed the lady so loudly that the coachman reined in his horses, and turned suddenly around in amazement, to see what was the matter; but perceiving it was only a matrimonial quarrel, he went on with his "get ups," as before.

"Pray now, dear, don't excite yourself. You know I was only telling you what you told me yourself. I would not wound your feelings for the world. Are you not my own, little wife?"

"Oh, you cruel, black-hearted monster. To add insult to injury in this manner. To pretend that you have got one spark of human feeling in your heart. To call me your own, little wife. Oh, dear, oh, dear," and the little lady went off in a fit of hysterics; but seeing they had arrived at the head of the avenue, and hearing the slave tell the driver they had only a

mile further to go, she concluded to save her fit for the special benefit of her husband, when they retired that evening.

Are you anxious to be made acquainted with our charming travelers, or have you already recognized in them, Marcia's school teacher and her father's old friend, Mr. Johnson? I know not how it was, but the patient, long-suffering teacher, had thrown aside all the patience which once had characterized her, and seemed to set herself to work to make her husband miserable. She had in reality popped the question to Mr. Johnson, and he, not knowing very well how to refuse, was obliged to comply with her offer, and never was there a more perfect specimen of a poor hen-pecked husband.

The meeting between Marcia and her old friends was affecting indeed; and the ill-tempered wife seemed to lose in her presence the austerity which had marked her conversation in the carriage. Mrs. Woodville did the honors of her house, with the hospitality always met with in the South and West; and Mr. Woodville exerted himself to please the friends of his child.

One after another, Mrs. Johnson called up the children to her, and inquired if they knew the Catechism by heart, the ten commandments, and the Lord's prayer. Having satisfied herself upon this point, she made numerous inquiries about their studies, and reprimanded them severely for knowing so little; telling them the children at the North knew more when they

were born than they did now. In the midst of this conversation Harry Percy entered. He had been taking a ride, and knew nothing of the arrival of the strangers. He received Mrs. Johnson with an eager welcome, which was prompted by the affection he felt for her, for her first sympathy in his devotion to Marcia. Thus this hard, cold woman, who had permitted all the gentler emotions of her soul to freeze who was leading the best-natured and most innocent of men a miserable life, who felt no sympathy with the wretched, the poor, or the wicked, still had one trait of goodness; one green spot left fresh and beautiful, amid all the parched and arid dryness of her heart.

Do not chide her. Do not condemn her. Go and take a number of scholars of all ages, from seven to seventeen. Shut yourself up for years with them. Go through the routine, day after day, of teaching them what you know yourself, and let the children be as amiable as children ever were known to be, still you will come out of that prison-house, for prison a school-room is, say what you will, a cross, ill-natured person, without, indeed, you have the temper of a saint. No one can know but those who have tried teaching school, the innumerable trials which beset the life of a teacher. Next to that of a child's nurse, it is the most annoying business any one can earn their bread by.

The evening was being very pleasantly spent, and Mr. Johnson seemed to be enjoying an amount of

peace of a most unprecedented extent, when unluckily he began one of those old stories, which always were the abomination of Mrs. Johnson, even when she was a maiden. He said—

"Seeing Marcia lying here, looking so pale and wasted, reminds me of the time when I was a young man, and was very ill of typhoid fever. Marcia's father came often to see me, and really"—

"I am sure, Mr. Johnson, Marcia don't want to hear anything about you, or the bilious fever or typhoid, or whatever you may choose to call it." And then, in a low tone, she added, "pray don't make a nuisance of yourself."

"Oh! don't prevent Mr. Johnson from telling me all about it," said Marcia. "Indeed, I love to hear him talk of my father."

"Well, Marcia, just as you please. I only thought it would annoy you, and I know men are so stupid, and have so little consideration for the gentler sex."

"Gentler sex," said the poor husband in a tone of subdued anguish. Then aloud he continued—

"And really he was a friend indeed to me. I positively believe I should have died had it not been for dear Mr. Walton. Do you not remember, Mrs. Walton, the many nice little things you made to tempt my appetite?"

"Very well, indeed, but I do not think the case merits such warm elogiums."

"Oh! yes, it does, for you saved my life."

"What a dreadful pity," said Mrs. Johnson, in an under tone, intended for no ears but her devoted husband's. Of course Mr. Johnson smiled, and bowed in acknowledgment of the implied compliment.

"Was I living then, mother?" asked Marcia, in the effort she made to turn the conversation from the hapless husband.

"Yes, my child, you were a baby of some five or six weeks old. The circumstance is very plainly impressed upon my mind on account of a dreadful accident by which you very nearly lost your life."

"Pray tell it, Mrs. Walton," asked Harry Percy, and he was seconded in his request by the whole party. Mrs. Walton began—

"Your father came home one evening from the store, and told me he should like to take his friend Johnson some chicken soup. I went into the kitchen and superintended the making of it. As soon as it was done, I had it put in a little kettle, and your father went out with it. When I left my room to go to the kitchen, you were lying in the middle of the bed, in a deep sleep. Your sister was in the crib, at the foot of the bed; and the nurse sat at a little table, sewing. Suddenly she imagined she saw on the snowy curtains which hung at the windows, an immense spider. She picked up the lamp, and held it close to the curtain, without thinking of the risk she was running. A puff of wind blew the flame against the curtain, and in an instant the whole was in a light blaze. She

screamed wildly. I ran up the stairs, reached the room door, saw the devouring element raging near my sleeping children, and, unable to utter one word, I sank down in a fainting fit. The alarm was given. Several persons rushed in from the street. I was carried insensible from the house to a hotel opposite. A boy of fourteen pushed his way through the flames. He seized my children,—Marcia, what ails you? You look so pale and agitated. My God, she has fainted."

And true enough, with eyes half closed, pallid lips, and livid countenance, the poor wanderer looked as if she had breathed her last sigh. Terror seemed to hold Harry Percy to the spot, but Mrs. Walton and Mrs. Woodville bathed the sweet girl's temples, chafed her hands, and applied a vinaigrette to her nose. Slowly she recovered, opened her eyes wide, gazed attentively around her, and stretching forth her arms, she said to Harry Percy, in a tone of the sweetest melody—

"Take me to your heart, love. Hold me close, close. Do not let them separate us. Oh! to think that I—I—was the baby you told me about the other day. To think it was you, my own, dear Harry, that saved me from being burnt to death, when I was a weak, helpless infant. Truth is indeed stranger than fiction."

"Are you the saviour of my children? Say, was it you who rescued them from the most horrible of deaths?" said Mrs. Walton. "Oh! why did you hide

yourself from me? I advertised for you. I sought you by every means in my power. Why did you not allow me the privilege of showing you my gratitude?"

"Indeed, madam, I did not think I was doing any thing to call forth lasting gratitude. I was merely passing along the street, when a servant rushed out, screaming fire, in a loud tone of voice. I entered the house, followed by several men. 'There are children in the bed,' said the distracted servant girl. I ran quickly up the stairs. A lady lay fainting at the door of the room. Two men lifted her, and carried her down. I passed into the room, the smoke and flame were so great that I could not see my way. I felt it, however, and found the two children, one in the bed, still sleeping, unhurt; the other attracted me by its screams, from its little crib. I held them firmly in my arms, and rushed through the hot scorching blaze. I was welcomed, as I appeared on the door step, with deafening cheers. I was directed to carry them over to the hotel opposite. I did so, and returned to my home slightly scorched about my neck and hands, and my hair, which had been long, was burnt to the edge of my cap. I left town the next morning for my home, which was in the centre of New York State, and that is why your advertisement never reached me."

"Noble, excellent youth, we have now another tie to bind us together," said Mrs. Walton.

"My own, dear Harry," said Marcia, as she twined still more closely her arms about his neck. All the

rest of the party united in pronouncing it the most interesting thing they had heard for a long time. Mrs. Walton went on with her story:—

"I was carried to a hotel opposite, and all the ladies and gentlemen crowded around me, and used every exertion to restore me to consciousness. In the mean time Mr. Walton had arrived, and at last my dreadful fainting fit came to a close, and I opened my eyes once more upon existence. For some minutes I was astounded to look around and find myself in a strange parlor, crowded with faces I had never seen before. But suddenly I remembered all the dreadful truth, and springing wildly from the sofa, I screamed, 'Where's my children? Give me my children. Oh! my God, I know that my children are burnt alive.' At that moment of uncontrollable agony, a servant entered with my two darlings in his arms. They had but that moment been rescued. I sprang towards him, seized my children, covered them with kisses, clasping them to my heart with the wildest and most passionate caresses, and then went off into another fainting fit. When I entirely recovered, the fire had been extinguished in my house, my husband bent over me with tones of love and words of endearment, and told me that a boy of twelve or fourteen years old, wearing a white coat and a cap, had saved my children at the risk of his life. Every means in our power were used to discover the saviour of our precious babes, but it availed not; and till this hour I

remained in ignorance of him. God is merciful that he has now, in this remarkable manner, revealed to me that which I had never hoped to discover on earth. Dear Harry, from this moment consider me your mother, and I will love you as my own son."

"And most blessed and happy I shall be in the possession of such a mother; and do not think that I will fall short in the tenderness of a son. Let this be the seal to the compact." He raised her hand affectionately to his lips, and breathed upon it the blessings and love of a filial heart.

"Do tell me," Mrs. Johnson, said Marcia, "something about my old school-mates. What has become of Helen Mars, and Adelaide Black, and Jane Ray, and Isabella Blacknell? They were all in the same class with me, and were much older than I was, with the exception of Isabella."

"Helen Mars is the reigning belle of New York, and she was pronounced also the belle of Newport and Saratoga. There has been some talk of her marrying a rich young Englishman, but I believe that has all fallen through. She has crowds of admirers, and I am of opinion that she favors none of them.

"Adelaide Black always was a serious, earnest kind of a girl. She became a member of the church, last summer, and was married to a Missionary in the fall; she sailed with him, in October last, for India, and I have received several letters from her, telling me that her health is excellent, and describing to me the beau-

ties as well as horrors of the country. She told me of a lion hunt she went to, on the back of an elephant, and the description was so thrilling, that my blood chilled as I read it. Poor Jane Ray is an orphan. You know she always was delicate at school, and now her health is miserable.

"She was always taking medicine at school. I often told her she would destroy her health if she went on taking those poisonous drugs, but she said her mother thought it was neccessary.

"Well, she went on taking them till her constitution became entirely destroyed. It never was very strong, but still, with proper exercise and fresh air, and suitable diet, she might have done very well. I fear, however, that this next winter will be her last on earth.

"And now I come to your friend and play-mate, Isabella Blacknell. She is still the same amiable, docile, lovely girl she was at school. Her face bears the same impress of childish beauty, and her manners are as simple and unaffected as they were when I first knew her; and you know she was only nine years old when she came first to our school. She is very much admired, but does not seem to notice it, much less to be elated by it. In short, she is one of the few that retains, amid all the intercourse with the rude world, the pure and spotless innocence of childhood."

"Does she seem perfectly happy?"

"Oh, yes, very happy. She comes often to see me,

and asks always, with the tenderest interest, after your health."

"Does she know that I am going to die, so soon?" asked Marcia, as her eyes slowly filled with tears.

"I told her all, my child."

"And no doubt she found some tears to weep in remembrance of her school-mate and friend. Alas, what changes a few years bring to all of us. Of that bright, young, happy class of gay, glad spirits, one reigns in the halls of fashion, forgetful of the pure happiness of her girlhood, and intent only on making conquests of the rich and great; one is afar from her native land, amid the burning sands and scorching heats of India; another has lost her parents and health, and knows she soon must die; a fourth, alone, is happy, and retains the simplicity and meekness of childhood; and I, the fifth, far from the home of affection, am dying, and going into the stranger's grave, where you, my dear mother, cannot come to plant flowers and shed tears in remembrance of her who sleeps beneath."

"Nay, my sweet child, if it be your wish, I will carry you home, and lay you in our own, dear Greenwood, beside the father and sister whose memory you so fondly cherish. Can you think I shall forget the last duties I can ever pay you?"

"Ah, no, mother; I knew I should only have to express a wish, and you would gratify it. I can die more easily now, when I know that your dear hands

will teach the roses and cypress vines to cluster and mingle on my grave. And you, dear Harry—will you not often leave the bustle of New York to spend an hour at that lonely spot, made sacred by the memory of the cherished dead?"

"Sweet girl, can you ask me such a question? Ah, believe me, the dearest spot on earth will be my Marcia's grave, and if from your home in heaven you can look down upon the hallowed beauties of Greenwood, you will often see your devoted lover kneeling at your grave, and weeping for the presence of the 'bright morning-star of his existence, which has beggared his life in vanishing.'"

CHAPTER XIX.

A gentleman arrived at Pine Grove, and was closeted with Mr. Woodville for some hours. At length he came forth to seek Marcia, and giving her a paper, told her to read it. Its contents puzzled and surprised her. It was a present of twenty thousand dollars, formally made over from Mr. Woodville to his adopted daughter.

"What noble generosity," said Marcia, handing the paper to her mother. "But, I cannot understand why father does this now. I have no use for the

money. I am going where the blessings of God are obtained without money and without price."

"You must understand Mr. Woodville's motive to be, that you may do as you please with the money, and bequeath it to whom you like."

"Good, kind father. I see now why he has done this. God in taking me away from the world has raised up the means of providing for my loss to my dear mother. Please have a will drawn up speedily, and bring it to me, and I will sign it. Give the entire sum, without any reservation, to my dearly beloved mother. How soon can you have the document ready?"

"About this time to-morrow, I think."

"Do not let it be longer. My strength is failing fast. I would not die till it is accomplished."

"I shall use all possible diligence, rest assured."

The lawyer bowed and retired. Marcia threw her arms about her mother's neck, and said—

"How happy I am. I can die easy now, for you will be removed from want. You can surround yourself with every comfort. You can educate dear Benny. Why do you not rejoice with me? What makes you look so sad?"

"Alas! can you ask? Does not the very act that makes me rich, deprive me of my blessed child, my darling daughter?"

"Do not weep. You will still have a son. A son, did I say? Nay, then, but you will have two sons.

Will not my dearly-loved, my idolized Harry, have a place in your heart, my mother?"

"Oh! yes, but nothing can fill the void your loss will make, my sinless child. Oh! to think how fondly I have loved you, how tenderly I watched over your helpless infancy, your innocent childhood. How jealously I guarded you from evil and wrong. How I have prayed and wept for blessings on the Wanderer's way; and now—now to lose you, to see you go down and take your place beside the husband of my youth, and my first born daughter. Alas! alas! it is too much. There will only remain one poor, little, delicate, tiny child, and what if I lose him too? But a slender thread unites him to life. I cannot bear to think of it."

"Are you resolved, dear mother, to exclude dear Harry from your heart? Will you not suffer the noble, generous preserver of my life in infancy, to fill the vacancy I shall make? Oh! mother, he is worthy of your love. He is good and kind. He loves me with his whole heart. Can you help feeling affection for one who has loved me so tenderly? Methinks that should be a tie to bind you closely together. In the long winter evenings you can sit together and talk of me. In the long days of summer you can visit and beautify my grave. Say, mother, dear, will you not be reconciled?"

"I will try, dearest. I cannot talk calmly about it now, but I remember, my sweet child, the portrait

painter is to be here this morning, and he will be ready to take the first sitting within an hour. Do you feel equal to the task?"

"I am quite weak, but if I take a little sleep perhaps I shall be stronger. Please draw the curtains close, and then sit down beside me, and lay my head in your bosom."

Mrs. Walton did as she was directed, and in a few moments the beautifully violet-colored eyes closed in a gentle sleep, and a sweet smile played over the invalid's face, seeming like light from that happy country beyond the stars.

The hour drew to a close, and Mrs. Woodville came to announce the arrival of the portrait painter. The least noise was sufficient to break the slumber of the lovely sleeper. She told Mrs. Woodville she was quite ready for the sitting. Placed in a large chair of crimson velvet, with her snowy drapery falling loosely around her, and displaying the perfect roundness of one beautiful shoulder, and the exquisite proportions of her neck and bosom, Marcia sat, awaiting the entrance of the artist who had been sent for from New Orleans, to paint her portrait,—and who had acquired, in Italy and France, a just celebrity for the truthfulness and beauty of his pictures. Used as he was to all the rich beauty of southern climes, still he started with admiration as he discovered sitting in the shadowy light, the fair Wanderer of our story. What she had lost in the healthy fullness of her cheek, was made up

in the brilliant hectic which burned in bright spots on her face, and in the high intelligence that lightened up her eyes with supernatural beauty. The expression of pensive thought and girlish innocence was serenely blended, and, in a word, she was the embodiment of all that is lovely and beautiful on earth—all that is holy and angelic in heaven.

For one weary hour the artist plyed his brushes, and so eager was he to complete his picture, he would have worked at it all day, had he not been gently reminded by Harry Percy that the poor invalid's strength was giving out, and that he must not expect too much at once. It was well he stopped just when he did, for Marcia was again seized with one of those terrible fits of shortness of breath, that usually paralyzed all present. Indeed, they were appalling to witness. No one can judge how much so, till they have themselves seen the gasping agony of a dying soul for breath, vainly struggling to regain it, till black in the face.

But these paroxysms were of short duration. Indeed, no human being could have lived through them had they been long; and now, completely exhausted, Marcia laid on the sofa, as pallid and hueless as the face of death.

Octave and Mary came in the afternoon, and the pretty little Kate was with them. Octave talked gaily to Marcia, tried to raise her sinking spirits, and told

her many anecdotes about John Woodville, at which she was obliged to laugh.

"You should see him," said he, "when Mary tells him to hand her work basket. He will, in the most demure manner, bring her a glass of water. If she asks him for a book he will bring her a thimble. Perhaps she wants the saddle horses brought out to take a ride. He walks out and tells the cook her mistress wants her to make rice-cakes for supper."

"What are you all laughing at?" said John, who at that moment appeared at the door.

"Nothing of any consequence," said Octave.

"I should think not, if it were any thing you had to tell. Marcia, I have been getting my likeness taken. Should you like to see it? People say it flatters me too much."

"Pray let me see it," said Marcia. John opened a small leather case and handed it to her. She took it with a look of serious scrutiny, which the next moment was changed into a laugh; for the case contained nothing but the picture of a baboon.

At this moment Laurie entered with her cat, and John raised another laugh by very ceremoniously introducing pussy as his neice. Kate told him she was not prepossessed in favor of the cat, if it were a specimen of his relations.

"Mother," said Octave, "I will just tell you what brought Mary over here to-day."

"Don't believe him," cried Mary. "He thinks nothing of telling stories."

"I leave it to Kate, if it be a story. Mary said let's go over to mother's to-day, and get some strawberries. Now, deny that, if you can."

"Mother, these very words he said himself. I leave it to Kate, if he did not."

"You will have to settle it between you," said Kate, laughing, "I have always heard it was a dangerous thing for a third party to meddle in matrimonial affairs."

"I have no doubt it is so, and yet I wish it were not," said poor Mr. Johnson, in a low tone of voice.

"I leave it to all present if Mary did not say so, and I will prove it to you. In the first place, I said it myself. In the second place, Mary and I have become one. In the third place, Mary said so, because I did. Now, aint that all plain enough, I would ask?"

A general "yes," followed this question, joined in by every one present but Mrs. Johnson; and poor Mary had to confess, with a merry laugh and an ominous shake of the finger, that Octave was right for once in the world, and that she was wrong.

"Who will pick the strawberries?" said Mrs. Woodville.

"Let me help. Oh! I love to pick them so much," said Kate.

"I will go too, mother," said Mary, and Flora and

Laurie both joined their entreaties to be allowed to go to the strawberry beds.

Of course Octave carried a small basket for Mary's accommodation, and John followed his example with Kate. I do not know how it was, but Octave returned with a basket full of berries, while that of John's had not more than a dozen in it.

"Oh! you lazy boy," said Mrs. Woodville, as he presented his basket.

"I don't believe he is lazy," said Octave. "I do not doubt he has been industriously employed tormenting poor Kate, every moment since he has been gone."

"Has he Kate,?" asked Mary.

Kate's rosy cheeks were rosier still, and without replying, she ran away to Marcia.

"A very suspicious circumstance," said Octave, "and I think with those features we might make out a very strong case."

"Were you ever happy, uncle, in your life, that you were not tormenting some one?" asked John.

"I might, with still greater propriety, ask you the same question; for a greater torment and plague never had existence on earth. I used absolutely to be afraid to meet you when I was coming from father Jones's plantation."

"Poor little thing. You needed some one to protect you from madcap John, did you?"

"Come, come boys; I see them coming to call us to supper," said Mrs. Woodville.

The tea table was laid on the porch, and softly shaded from too much light by the rose vines which grew all over the front of the house. The sofa on which Marcia was laid, was rolled out into the porch, and placed at the table. The family took their places at the hospitable board, and Mr. Woodville asked a blessing. It was a beautiful sight. That large family reunited. Mrs. Walton, her two children, the friend of her husband, and the teacher of her child, all assembled at that richly supplied table. Let us not except the noble Harry Percy, and the far-famed artist, who was so intent in looking at the fair face before him, that he seemed unable to eat his supper. In fact he knew that before his picture was completed, the lovely original would be no more, and he studied the beauties of her changing face while living, satisfied that his mind would retain them after her death, and he could then paint from memory.

A pleasant family party was that, broken up only to let them all pair off, and walk through the well graveled paths of the garden. And Marcia watched them as they walked to and fro, listened to Kate's silvery laugh, and Mary's happy prattling; but at length she turned to the two dear ones who sat beside her, and begged them to go and join the rest of the party in their healthful exercise. Mrs. Walton at last consented, and Mr. Woodville coming up at the

moment, took her arm in his, and bore her off, leaving Harry Percy to amuse Marcia.

"Go walk, dearest. It will do you good."

"Nay, my sweet love: it does me far more good to sit near you, to hold your hand thus; to look into your dear face, and read its love for me. Do not banish me from you."

"Banish you, dear Harry. You know I could not do that. The most precious joy I know in living is that of your presence. I feel cold and dead when you are absent, but when you are near me I am another being, instinct with hope and joy, and I feel, at such times, there are two principles, or rather I should say, passions, warring within me for the mastery, and the names of these opposing powers are Love and Death."

"Would to God that Love might be the victor, and award me the boon I would prize higher than any honor earth could grant. But, I do you grievous wrong to talk to you thus. I, that should seek to reconcile you to your lot, and strengthen your weakness. Pardon me, dear love, and tell me what I shall talk about to amuse you."

"It matters little what the subject, if it be your voice I hear."

"Sweet flattery. Do not, dear Marcia, talk to me thus, or I shall be spoiled. I seem, when I come near you, to lose all my pride and dignity, and become tender and gentle as yourself. I know not what strange

influence you exercise over me, but I have no longer a will in your presence."

"I am no witch, Harry, so do not accuse me of it, and as to spoiling you, nothing on earth can do that. Were you a person that could be spoiled, this wayward heart of mine had never acknowledged your sway."

"How did you know, sweet innocent, what my disposition was when you first saw me? and it was then that you loved me, was it not?"

"Yes, dear Harry—in the first smile that broke over your face, awoke the love which will end only with life. I knew nothing of you, it is true, but had you been false-hearted and base, my impulses, which have never yet deceived me, would have given me warning of your character. You smiled upon me that bright and sunny smile, which expresses so much of the truthful sincerity, and boyish innocence of your heart; and that look shone upon me; lit up the darkened recessess of my soul, spoke to me of love and hope, and their many thousand joys, and shrined itself upon the virgin tablets of my heart, to the preclusion of all meaner loves. Do you say this is romance? Call it so if you will, I know not what it is, but this I know, living or dying, I am yours with all the tender devotion that ever filled the breast of woman. Nothing but death can make me forget you, and you know, dearest, that death remembers not."

"How singular that you should thus have loved

him, who for three years before had watched you; as slowly and beautifully you expanded from the child into the perfect woman; who without ever having spoken to you, gave you his heart, and who flew on the wings of love to be near you when he heard of your illness."

"Nay, it was not strange, dear Harry. It was but the secret affinity of pure and spotless love. Believe me, there are ties that bind souls together, and let what will start up to separate them, still they unite, and hold that sweet intercourse which diffuses through their existence the purest happiness known to mortals. Regardless of obstacles, unmoved by time or distance, unchilled by adversity, faithful and true through evil and through good report, true love burns on, a steadfast and holy flame, lighted only at the shrine of God himself."

"It must be as you say, dearest. You have but given expression in language to the thoughts of my heart. But, see, our conversation is about to be brought to a close; for warned by the coming darkness they are all returning to the house."

"I shall retire as soon as mother gets here. I must sit up for my portrait to-morrow, and I must try to get a good rest to-night. Kiss me—good night now, and please send Susan to help roll me in."

The morning came, and at the appointed hour came the attorney from D. with the will ready to be signed. Marcia wrote her name in free, bold characters,

and then signified her readiness for the admission of the artist. The scene of the day before was repeated, and Harry Percy saw starting forth upon the canvas, a living resemblance of his tenderly-loved Marcia. He felt that now, indeed, he should possess a link that would be omnipotent in bringing the blessed past before him. He shared all the enthusiasm of the artist, and nearly two hours passed away before he thought of the fatigue the poor girl was suffering.

"Come, let that do for to-day. Poor thing, she cannot stand it any longer."

"Well, one more sitting, and I think we shall have it perfect. You will promise one more to-morrow, Miss Walton?"

"If I live," was the mild reply, spoken in the soft, gentle voice that thrilled ever to the hearts of all who heard it.

CHAPTER XX.

"What though the loving heart is wrung
By chilling words of cold farewell?
And o'er its dying hopes is flung
The echoing knell?

Shall we not all meet there to love,
With love that has no trembling fears?
In that dear home, far, far above
This land of tears?"

Marcia slept a long time, and awoke refreshed. After partaking of a slight repast, she expressed a

wish to see all the children. She wanted them to come in and play about her room. One after another they drew near her, received her kiss of affection, and kindly wishes, and then they commenced to play, not with the wild, boisterous mirth of childhood, but with subdued gentleness prompted by their love for the fair young invalid. Little Benny drew near his sister, kissed her, and then laid his head down on her pillow, while she caressingly passed her hand over his sunny curls. Mr. Woodville entered the room, and approached her.

"Sit down, father," she said. "I have been wanting to see you so much all day."

"I did not come before, my daughter, because I feared I should disturb you. Tell me what you wanted to see me for? You know I am always obedient to your wishes."

"I have no wishes to make known to you, dear father, only to tell you to remember me when I am gone."

"Can I ever forget you, sweet vision of youth and innocence? Ah! think it not. God sent you to me to make me love my fellow creatures more. You have softened a hard heart, and taught me to pity where I used to judge with harshness and view with suspicion."

"Then my life has not been useless; and, indeed, each day as I grow older I am convinced, more and more, that we should have charity with all men. Sometimes people err from a wrong education, which

has taught them to view every thing through a false medium."

"Ah! believe me, my child, we are all the creatures of circumstances. We say, when we hear that so and so has done such a thing, we should never have acted so; but we don't know any thing about it. We never know what we will do till we are tried. Happy are they who glide along the current of life, and never feel its cares and sorrows, but happier far are they who, although surrounded by trouble, and sorely afflicted, fight the good fight, and come out of the furnace purified and strengthened. But, Marcia, I will not weary you by talking so much. I should not forget how long you were forced to sit up this morning for the painter. How do you feel, my child?"

"Very weak, but it seems as if all pain had left me. I know not how to account for the strange feeling of happiness that is filling my heart. It seems to me that I must be drawing very near to the hour when I shall throw off this poor corruptible body, and put on the robes of immortality."

"And do you shrink, my daughter, from the trial? Have you sufficiently weaned your heart and its affections from those you love, to be willing to go when God calls you home?"

"It is a difficult question to answer, dear father. I may say I do not love any of you less, but I love God and my Redeemer more. I bid you farewell only for a little season. I shall meet you in that land where

farewells are unspoken, and partings are unknown. We certainly cease to hate when we leave this world, but let us hope we do not cease to love."

"Very true, if that love does not carry with it the jealousies, disappointments and sorrows of humanity."

"Of course heaven would exclude all these. We shall love with all the pure, holy affection of angels, but the black passions which stand between us and happiness here, will have no power to torment our souls hereafter. I have come to look upon heaven as the fruition of bliss. God would not have created within us those yearnings for happiness, if he had not also created happiness for us. He loves me tenderly, and in removing me from the sorrows and temptations of life, he proves his undying and boundless love. A short time ago I could not recognize a blessing in so severe a blow. My eyes are opened, and I feel that in leaving all the bright things of earth, that smile but to deceive us, that I shall inherit a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and I can say, in all truth and sincerity, 'Thy will be done.'"

"You look beyond the clouds and darkness that shadow the view of death, my child, else you could not speak so calmly. How rejoiced I am to find you thus tranquil and happy. You are teaching us a lesson of submission, and I trust we may profit by it. I will leave you now, for here is Harry, and he cannot fail of proving better company than your poor old father."

"I should be very ungrateful to think so."

Mr. Woodville left the room, and Harry Percy took his place at the side of his beloved. For long hours they talked, dwelling on the happiness of the last few weeks, and recalling every word and look of affection that had passed between them. Poor things, they could only look back, for unlike the many lovers that we meet, they could not revel in the future. Ah! think how sad and lonely you would be, if the bright hopes of your heart were thus clouded. You can bear the ills of to-day with fortitude. You can bow beneath the storms that sweep over you, for you say there is a better day coming. There is a bright and happy future. Oh! pity then the dark fate of those who have no hope save in death. Who live from day to day, and go through all the duties of life, and yet whose hearts lie cold and dead within them, whose pulses never quicken with the glad thrillings of hope.

But, as Marcia sat and talked, with her head resting on the bosom of him she loved, and her arms twined affectionately about him, a fearful paleness overspread her features. She said, in a low, distinct voice—

"Susan, call my mother and Benny. I am going fast. Be quick."

Susan instantly did as she was ordered. Harry Percy bent over her. He smoothed back the wet, tangled curls from her pure white forehead. He sought by the tenderest caresses to soothe her sinking spirits. Mrs. Walton entered, followed by every member of the family. Harry Percy laid the dear

head on Mrs. Walton's bosom, and then knelt beside her. She said—

"I am so glad to see you once more. Octave is not here. It is well. You have all been kind and good to me, and I hope to meet you in that land where there is no death. Farewell, my dear teacher, farewell. May God bless you all for the light you have shed upon the Wanderer's way. Harry, dear, take a pencil and write some verses as I repeat them to you."

Harry did as he was directed, and thus he wrote:—

THE LAST SIGHS OF THE DYING.

I am dying; I am dying. The cold night breeze of death,
Is fanning now my pallid brow, I feel its icy breath.
The gay, the young, the beautiful are fading from my sight;
Dark shadows creep around me. They vail me from the light.

I am dying; I am dying. Oh! never, never more,
Can Love or Hope delight me, my pleasures here are o'er,
I must leave thee, my heart's idol; Oh! hear my dying lay,
And think of me, dear Harry, when I am far away.

I am dying; I am dying: My voice is failing fast:
Each breath that comes so painful, seems to me to be the last.
And yet my heart devoted, teems with images of thee,
Then soothe my dying agony, and say thou'lt think of me.

I am dying; I am dying: Throw wide the curtains, dear,
Oh! let the soft spring breezes play gently round me here;
I inhale the fragrant blossoms, borne on the balmy air;
How once I loved to twine them in the tresses of my hair.

I am dying; I am dying; Oh! why will vain regret,
Hang round my last sad hours, and distress me even yet:
Oh! Heavenly Father aid me, and clear the darkening way,
Which leads through Night and Sorrow, to a bright and glorious day.

I am dying; I am dying. Farewell my mother sweet;
Farewell, beloved father; dear Benny do not weep.
Harry, I go to glory. Oh! meet me in the sky;
I come, my blessed Saviour: I breathe my last, and die.

Suddenly the lips of the sufferer moved convulsively, and then her teeth chattered like a person in a strong ague fit. Rolling her large eyes up, and fixing them with an expression of the most touching beauty and innocence, she said—

"Mother, what is that? What makes my teeth chatter so?"

The answer, spoken in a low, solemn tone, which was, however, fearfully distinct, was—

"My daughter, this is death!"

It rang through the silent apartment, like the knell of a broken heart. One after another every one drew near, kissed the pale cheek and brow of the dying girl, and breathed their blessings on her head. Then her brother received the last words of advice, the last kiss of a sister he loved tenderly; but unable to restrain his tears he wept upon her bosom.

And now, her mother clasped her dying child to her heart, and asked her if she knew who it was that held her thus fondly. "Ah!" said the sweet invalid,

"could I in life forget my blessed mother." Then, with the strange energy which often comes in the struggle between life and death, she raised herself from her mother's breast, and throwing her arms around Harry's neck, rested her head on his shoulder. Gently he turned her face to meet his own, and pressed his warm lips upon her cold, compressed mouth. For one instant she returned the thrilling pressure: for one instant she held tightly to her innocent bosom the form she loved so dearly: for one instant the hearts that loved so tenderly united in their throbbings; and then a smile, like light from heaven, irradiated her face: she sighed the dear name of Harry, and straightening herself, she closed her eyes, and plunged into the dark ocean of Eternity.

Thus died one of the loveliest of the daughters of earth. Thus, in the morning of life, with the diadem of virgin purity upon her brow, with the spotless beauty of innocence upon her breast, she passed away, leaving behind a void in the hearts of affection, that other love could never fill.

It was thus that Harry wrote of her, a few days ago, when he visited her last resting place:

TO MY LOVED AND LOST MARCIA.

Lovely wert thou as the stars,
That shine so bright at hour of even;
Lovely wert thou as the moon,
That silvers o'er night's starry heaven.

Lovely wert thou as the flowers,
That bloom and scent the sunny air,
Aye, sweeter far than life's gay hours,
Wert thou, fairest of the fair.

'Neath the weeping willow bending,
Gazing on thy lonely grave;
Mourn I still with tears unending,
How we lost the power to save.
Gently moans the winds about thee,
Fair young flowers their perfume shed;
I am lost, undone, without thee,
My early loved, and early dead.

Marcia, sweet, tho' death has torn thee,
From my loving breast away,
Though the angels far have borne thee,
To the realms of endless day;
Still my heart is not all sadness:
Dearest, we shall meet again,
In that land of joy and gladness,
Where God permits not care or pain.

Fare thee well, then. Thus I breathe thee
Vows of endless truth and love.
Never, dear one, ah! believe me,
Shall I cease to look above,—
Where, 'mid bands of angels singing,
Tuning thy harp to sweetest praise,
Thou o'er its golden chords art flinging,
The hopes of brighter, happier days.

CHAPTER XXI.

My task is well nigh done. It remains for me now to look about me and see what has become of the characters that have played a part in my story.

Octave Woodville still lives on his plantation, with his lovely young wife; and a second Mary has come to bless their youth, and bring joy to their household. Mrs. Woodville moves about her home with the same stately dignity, and within her bosom beats the same affectionate heart. Her grandchildren are progressing in their studies, and often, when they all assemble in the evening, they recall the visions of the past, and gaze upon the touching pictures that memory brings before them. The name of Marcia is held in reverence among them, and they regard her as an angel who once lingered near them, to teach them of another and a better world.

In a very comfortable house in Brooklyn, may be found our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. Mr. J. is as good-natured as ever, and Mrs. J., becoming awakened to the unkindness of her feelings and actions to one she had promised at the altar of God to love, honor, and obey, now makes the most affectionate and dutiful of wives. Need I add that they often go to the Wanderer's grave, and recall the sweet time when,

like a fairy spirit, she moved about them, smiled her sweet smiles, and laughed her merry laugh, and woke within their hearts the love that death itself could not eradicate.

The wicked Mary was sold, with her son Jacob, to an extensive cotton grower in Louisiana. She has been placed at labor in the field, and is removed from the chance of harming Octave's young and lovely wife.

On the banks of the beautiful Connecticut, a lovely residence, embowered in trees, and surrounded by verdant lawns, flowery parterres, leafy woods and murmering waterfalls, contains the still charming and excellent mother of our fair Wanderer. Were you to go there and ask for Mrs. Walton, the servant would stare at you, and say no such person lived there. If, however, you should pass that way, and inquire for Mr. and Mrs. John H. Woodville, you would at once be ushered into the presence of as happy a couple as you ever met. The adopted father of Marcia is not the lonely, desolate old man we knew at the commencement of our story. He had little difficulty in winning the heart of the mother, after all his devotion to the child, and here, in the performance of his duties as a man and a christian, his life draws peacefully to a close. Two children may be seen daily, playing in the groves, gathering flowers, and laughing with the glad mirth of childhood. One of them is our fair little Benny; still fair and delicate, with the same

sunny curls his sister so loved to twine around her wax-like fingers. The other is a sweet little girl of two or three summers, the child of Mr. Woodville's old age. Need we tell you how he loves it? How he has named it after her sainted sister, Marcia? How, at the hour of twilight, he points to her home beyond the stars, and tells the little innocent, sweet tales of the days when first he met her, with the halo of innocence and beauty on her brow? How he saw the roses fade?—how her eyes closed on earth, and opened on the far side of that ocean that rolls between us, and the Life Eternal?

In the love of an affectionate and devoted husband, blessed with the smiles and happiness of her children, removed far above the cares of poverty, and surrounded by the countless luxuries and blessings of wealth, Mrs. Walton forgets the sorrows of her past life. She treasures the memory of her lost child as a link that binds her to that Blessed land God has promised to his faithful children.

A mammoth steam ship leaves her dock amid the cheers and blessings of those standing on the shore. She bears with her vast numbers of the great and good of our land, and there are among her passengers some friends of our own. A tall, handsome young man waves his last adieux to his friends on shore. A fair young creature, all smiles and beauty, leans upon his arm. She takes a long last look of the towering spires, the rows of warehouses and numerous dwellings

of her own native New Orleans. She is leaving it, perhaps forever, and yet she does not weep. She has bidden farewell to father, mother and brother, and now she has gone forth on the ocean of life, with one strong arm to guide her; with one loving heart to shield her. She fears not for the future, but with all the gay, glad spirits of her young heart, Kate Kennet becomes Mrs. Woodville, and leaving all other friends, clings to him alone, in all the fondness of her loving heart, who first awoke within her the budding germs of love.

Harry Percy! Lonely and desolate, widowed until death, thou alone preservest, in all its greenness and unfading beauty, the memory of thy lost love. They call thee hard and cold. They do not know thy heart that speak of thee thus.

In the paths of ambition, Harry Percy sought oblivion of the sorrows that filled his heart. He cared not for fame, but it crowned him with honors; he esteemed not wealth, but it flowed into his coffers. He became a politician, and the great and good and wise men of our day crowd around him, and listen to his words as to those of an oracle. He has not an enemy on earth. He is kind to every human being that crosses his path, and the happiness of his life is to make others happy. It is in vain that the young and beautiful flit around him, displaying their charms in the mazy revolutions of the dance, or in the sweet melody of song. In vain they seek to ensnare his

heart or win his love. He smiles on them it is true, but it is the sickly smile of departed hope. His heart is in the grave with his lost idol. His love is no longer earthly. It pines for the Spirit Land.

He leaves the gay haunts of men, the wine cup wreathed in flowers, the festive hall, the smiles of beauty, the allurements of wit, and men say, he has some secret divinity he worships. He goes to the grave where sleeps the sweet vision of innocence that he loved so tenderly, and communes with the spirit of her that he believes lingers around him. He often watches the stars that look down calmly, as he lies beside her grave, and he believes he sees, in their softened radiance, the gentle eyes of his lost love, shedding upon him the mild and chastened glory of heaven.

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